# THE TROUBADOURS

A HISTORY OF

*PROVENÇAL LIFE AND LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE AGES*

BY

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# PREFACE.

ARTICLES by the present writer on the subject of Provençal life and literature have appeared off and on in the 'New Quarterly Magazine,' the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' 'Macmillan's Magazine,' and the late 'North British Review.' But this book is not a reprint of essays, although some of the materials formerly used have been re-embodied in it. It claims on the contrary to be the first continuous and at all adequate account in the English language of the literary epoch which forms its subject. For I cannot concede that name to a book on 'The Troubadours, their Loves and Lyrics,' published some years ago; for reasons which it is not my province here to state. And yet, excepting only the English version of the unsatisfactory book which the Abbé Millot compiled from St. Palaye's excellent materials, by that indefatigable translator and abridger in the last century, Mrs. Dobson, that volume is the only work on the Troubadours which England can boast of, at least as far as I am aware,—and of any important contribution to the subject I should be aware. By

the side of the admirable criticisms of old French literature which we owe to English authors from the days of Cary and the 'London Magazine' to those of Mr. Andrew Lang and other gifted writers of the present time, this neglect of the *langue d'oc* appears all the more glaring, especially when one considers the further fact that many of the districts in which the troubadours flourished were at the time when they flourished attached to the English crown. The amount of historical, and more especially English historical, material to be gleaned from the biographies and the works of the troubadours is indeed of the utmost value to the student.

In the composition of this book I have chiefly depended on the original poetry of the troubadours, but it is far from my wish to deny the services I owe to the works of French and German scholars, such as Raynouard, Francisque Michel, Dr. Mahn, and Diez, the founder of the modern school of Romance philology, a school which counts amongst its members Professors Bartsch, Tobler, Holland, in Germany, and MM. Paul Meyer and Gaston Paris in France; to mention only a few of the most distinguished names. Monographs of single troubadours, especially those of Peire Vidal by Professor Bartsch, and of the Monk of Montaudon by Dr. Philipson, have been of great use to me. I may also refer to my own critical edition of Guillem de Cabestanh's works.

Beyond this general acknowledgment I have not thought it necessary to encumber these pages with continuous notes of reference.

For my book is not intended as a scientific and exhaustive treatment of the subject. The time for that has not yet come in England. My present purpose was rather to attract learners than to teach less proficient students. In plain language in the first instance, to write a readable according to general prejudice such an achievement is impossible on the scientific principle. For scholarly purposes, I have, however, added a technical portion, chiefly concerned with metrical questions, in which the importance of Dante's scientific treatise for the classification of Provençal metres, pointed out by Professor Boehmer, has been for the first time proved by systematic application. The style and manner of this purely scientific portion sufficiently distinguish it from the remainder of the book. Still an additional warning to the unwary reader may not seem superfluous.

As another warning rather than encouragement to the same ingenious person I have added some interlinear versions of Provençal poems. It is addressed to those easy-going amateur philologists who believe themselves able to master a language by simply plunging into its literature without any previous study of grammar or dictionary. The

similarity of Provençal to the Latin and the more familiar Romance languages offers especially dangerous temptations in that respect. To test the truth of my remarks, I would ask the reader to attempt one of the poems at the end of this book with the sole aid of intelligent 'guessing,' and afterwards to compare the result of his conjecture with the literal version. He will then come to the conclusion that the *langue d'oc*, owing chiefly to the number of its homonymous words and the somewhat unsettled condition of its grammatical structure, is the most difficult, as it is the earliest, amongst languages sprung from the Latin stock.

# CONTENTS.

## PART I.

## *GENERAL.*

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE LANGUE D'OC.


PAGE

Decline of classic language . . . . . 3
Its mixture with German dialects . . . . . 3
Derivation of Romance languages . . . . . 4
Provençal branch . . . . . 5
Its limits . . . . . 5
Its relations to the sister languages . . . . . 6
Its dialects . . . . . 7
Its perfection by the Troubadours . . . . . 8
Its decline . . . . . 8


### CHAPTER II.

#### EARLY POPULAR EPICS.


The North-French epic . . . . . 10
The cycles of Arthur and Charlemagne . . . . . 11
The popular epic chanted . . . . . 11
Ferabras . . . . . 12
Girart de Rossilho . . . . . 12


### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ARTISTIC EPIC.


Roman de Jauffre . . . . . 14
Flamenca . . . . . 15

## CHAPTER IV.

### OTHER NARRATIVE AND DIDACTIC POEMS.

PAGE
Castel-Gilos . . . . . 27
Lay of the Parrot . . . . . 27
Essenhamen de la Donzela . . . . . 28
Rhymed chronicle of Navare . . . . . 28
The Song of the Crusade . . . . . 30
Tale of the Heretic . . . . . 31
Legends . . . . . 35
Boethius . . . . . 35
Corbiac's Tezaur . . . . . 37
Breviari d'Amor . . . . . 37
The biographies of the Troubadours . . . . . 39
Their authors . . . . . 39

## CHAPTER V.

### APOCRYPHA.

Provençal literature chiefly lyrical . . . . . 42
Fauriel's theory . . . . . 42
Aversion to epic poems . . . . . 42
Arnaut Daniel an epic poet . . . . . 43
His praise by Dante . . . . . 45
His lost epic of 'Lancelot' . . . . . 47
His obscurity . . . . . 48
An anecdote from his life . . . . . 49

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOCIAL POSITION OF PROVENÇAL POETS.

Joglars and Troubadours . . . . . 52
Troubadours exclusively lyrical poets . . . . . 52
Their social origin . . . . . 53
The sons of citizens . . . . . 54
Priests . . . . . 55
Reigning Princes . . . . . 55
Richard I. of England . . . . . 56
William IX. of Poitiers . . . . . 57
Protectors of the Troubadours . . . . . 58
Reward of the Troubadours . . . . . 59
Their friendship with princes . . . . . 60
Intercourse with noble ladies . . . . . 60
Frequently innocent . . . . . 61

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JOGLAR.

PAGE
Singers and musical composers . . . . . 63
Distinction between troubadours and joglars . . . . . 64
Joglars chiefly narrative poets . . . . . 67
Guiraut Riquier's attempted reform . . . . . 68
His 'Suplicatio' . . . . . 71

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TRACES OF POPULAR SONG—THE PASTORELA.

Guiraut Riquier's pastorelas . . . . . 77
Gui d'Uisel's pastorelas . . . . . 84
Marcabrun's pastorelas . . . . . 85

## CHAPTER IX.

### OTHER POPULAR FORMS.

The alba . . . . . 86
Its oldest form dramatic . . . . . 87
Guiraut de Bornelh's alba . . . . . 87
The common form of the alba . . . . . 88
Alba by an anonymous poet . . . . . 91
The serena . . . . . 93

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BALADA.

Its age . . . . . 94
Artistic and popular . . . . . 95
Subject of the balada love . . . . . 96
Its musical accompaniment . . . . . 97
'Coindeta soi' . . . . . 98
The dansa . . . . . 99

## CHAPTER XI.

### ARTIFICIAL FORMS OF POETRY.

Comparative simplicity of North-French forms . . . . 100
Arnaut Daniel inventor of the sestina . . . . . 102
Imitated by Dante . . . . . 103

PAGE
Metrical scheme of sestina . . . . . 103
Modern imitations . . . . . 105
Origin of the sonnet . . . . . 105
The descort . . . . . 106
Prose interludes . . . . . 106
The breu doble . . . . . 109
The retroensa . . . . . 110

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE TENSO.

Form of the tenso . . . . . 112
Definition of the Leys d'Amors . . . . . 113
'Turn and turn about' . . . . . 114
Actual discussions . . . . . 115
Fictitious disputants . . . . . 115
Topics of discussion . . . . . 116
Tenso between Bernart de Ventadorn and Peirol . . . . 117
Triple tenso . . . . . 121
Savaric de Mauleon . . . . . 122
Personal tenso . . . . . 124

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SIRVENTES.

Its want of formal distinction . . . . . 127
Its influence on men's minds . . . . . 128
General remarks on its tone . . . . . 128
Etymology of the word . . . . . 133
Chief divisions of the sirventes . . . . . 134
The planh . . . . . 134
Crusader's song . . . . . 136

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CANZO.

The canzo representative of Provençal poetry . . . . 142
Its frequent monotony . . . . . 143
Owing to over-elaboration . . . . . 144
Its beauties . . . . . 145
Its spontaneity . . . . . 146
The vers . . . . . 146

# PART II.

## *BIOGRAPHICAL.*

## CHAPTER XV.

### GUILLEM DE CABESTANH.

PAGE

His Provençal biography . . . . . 152
Discrepancies of other accounts . . . . . 159
Historical identity of Guillem de Cabestanh . . . . 160
The origin of fictitious additions . . . . . 160
The fatal canzo . . . . . 161
The story of the eaten heart possibly of mythical origin . . 162
Morals and manners of medieval Provence . . . . . 163
One of Guillem's canzos . . . . . 165

## CHAPTER XVI.

### PEIRE VIDAL.

His Provençal biography . . . . . 169
His eccentricities . . . . . 170
His love for Viscountess Azalais . . . . . 171
His journey to Palestine . . . . . 174
A canzo written during the journey . . . . . 174
His love for Loba . . . . . 176
'Emperor of Greece' . . . . . 178
His friendship with King Alfonso . . . . . 179
A crusader's song by Peire . . . . . 182
His death . . . . . 183

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BERTRAN DE BORN.

A type of the warlike baron . . . . . 184
Historic retrospect . . . . . 185
Bertran's attachment to Prince Henry of England . . . 187
He instigates the Princes to rebellion against Henry II. . . 188

## CHAPTER XVIII.

BERTRAN AND RICHARD COUNT OF POITOU.

PAGE
The causes of their quarrel . . . . . 191
Bertran's brother Constantine . . . . . 192
A sirventes by Bertran . . . . . 193
His connection with the rebellion of Henry II.'s sons . . 195
Young Henry's death . . . . . 199
Bertran's 'Complaint' . . . . . 200

## CHAPTER XIX.

SIEGE OF AUTAFORT—BERTRAN'S DEATH.

King Alfonso's treachery . . . . . 203
Fall of the castle . . . . . 204
Bertran's meeting with King Henry . . . . . 204
His friendship with Richard Cœur de Lion . . . . 206
Bertran's canzos . . . . . 207
His love affairs . . . . . 208
His death . . . . . 211

## CHAPTER XX.

THE MONK OF MONTAUDON.

His youth . . . . . 213
His worldly life . . . . . 214
His office at Puy Ste. Marie . . . . . 215
His 'likes and dislikes' . . . . . 215
His satires on women . . . . . 218
His cynicism . . . . . 220
His satire on the poets . . . . . 222

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE REFORMATION OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Wide-spread heresy . . . . . 228
Its chief seat in the South of France . . . . . 229
The Albigeois and Vaudois . . . . . 230
The Noble Lesson . . . . . 232
Doctrines of the Albigenses . . . . . 232
Great teachers amongst them . . . . . 235

PAGE
Noble converts to their sect . . . . . 235
Raimon VI. of Toulouse . . . . . 236
Pope Innocent III. his antagonist . . . . . 236
The first crusade . . . . . 239
Victory of the Church . . . . . 239

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE EPIC OF THE CRUSADE.

Its authorship . . . . . 242
Discrepancies between the two parts . . . . . 243
Description of Simon de Montfort's death . . . . . 245
Council of the Lateran . . . . . 247
The Battle of Muret . . . . . 249

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FOLQUET OF MARSEILLES.

Most troubadours anti-Papal . . . . . 254
Folquet's birthplace . . . . . 255
His love for Azalais . . . . . 256
A canzo addressed to her . . . . . 257
Her jealousy . . . . . 258
Her death . . . . . 260
He enters the order of Citeaux in consequence . . . . 260
His fanaticism . . . . . 261

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### GUILLEM FIGUEIRA AND PEIRE CARDINAL.

Guillem Figueira 'the hater of priests' . . . . . 263
His cynicism and love of low life . . . . . 263
His sirventes against 'Rome' . . . . . 264
Peire Cardinal represents a higher type . . . . . 265
His life . . . . . 265
His high moral tone and pessimism . . . . . 266
A fable . . . . . 266
His praise of Raimon VI. . . . . 268
His accusations of the priests . . . . . 268
A theological sirventes . . . . . 270

## CHAPTER XXV.

LADIES AND LADY TROUBADOURS.

PAGE
The lady of Provence . . . . . 273
Her polite education . . . . . 274
Her position in society . . . . . 277
Eleanor, wife of Henry II., the patroness of Bernart de Ventadorn 279
The poems of lady troubadours subjective . . . . . 282

## CHAPTER XXVI.

BEATRICE DE DIE.

The representative lady troubadour . . . . . 283
Her love for Rambaut of Orange . . . . . 283
She imitates his style . . . . . 284
Her tenso written in conjunction with Rambaut . . . . 286
Her song of resignation . . . . . 288

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COURTS OF LOVE.

Their fictitious character . . . . . 291
Raynouard's theory untenable . . . . . 292
Andreas Capellanus . . . . . 294

# PART III.

## *TECHNICAL.*

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ORIGIN OF RHYME.

Definition of rhythm . . . . . 299
Metrical system of Greek, of Roman, and of early Teutonic poems 300
Different meanings of arsis and thesis . . . . . 300
The leonine hexameter . . . . . 302
Rhyme independent of metrical accent . . . . . 303
Known to ancient poets . . . . . 303
Wilhelm Grimm's history of the rhyme . . . . . 303

PAGE
Examples from Virgil and Horace . . . . . 304
Rhyme destructive of the rhythmical principle . . . . . 306
Influence of rhythm on Provençal poetry . . . . . 308

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### RHYTHM.

Stability of metrical rules in Provençal poetry . . . . 311
Las Leys d'Amors . . . . . 311
Dante's 'De Vulgari Eloquio' applicable to Provençal poems . 313
The limits of the length of a verse . . . . . 313
Verses most frequently used . . . . . 316
The decasyllabic verse (endecasyllabus) . . . . . 318
The cæsura . . . . . 318
In 'Boethius' and epical poems . . . . . 320
The lyrical cæsura . . . . . 323

## CHAPTER XXX.

### RHYME.

Definition of the Leys d'Amors . . . . . 326
Accordansa sonan, consonan, and leonisme . . . . . 326
Rime riche . . . . . 328
The position of rhyme ('rims ordinals') . . . . . 330
Artificialities . . . . . 331
Connection of stanzas by means of rhyme . . . . . 333
The 'clavis' . . . . . 335
Guillem de Cabestanh's canzo 'Li douz cossire' . . . . 336
Further artificialities . . . . . 337

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE STANZA.

Its formation . . . . . 340
Dante's work of great value . . . . . 340
Definition of Leys d'Amors unsatisfactory . . . . . 341
Musical considerations . . . . . 342
Pedes and cauda . . . . . 344
Frons and versus . . . . . 345
Pedes and versus . . . . . 347

PAGE
Frons and cauda . . . . . 347
Concatenatio . . . . . 348
The tornada . . . . . 351
Metrical analysis of a canzo by Bernart de Ventadorn . . . 353

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SOME INTERLINEAR VERSIONS.

Canzo by Guillem de Cabestanh ('Li douz cossire') . . . 358
Idyll by Marcabrun ('A la fontana') . . . . . 364

*PART I.*

# GENERAL

# CHAPTER I.

## THE LANGUE D'OC.

WHEN about the end of the fourth century (A.D.) Germanic and Asiatic hordes began to invade the Western Empire with more and more irresistible force, the refined voice of Roman eloquence and poetry was soon drowned by the noise of barbarous tongues. Even before this irruption of new elements the language of the Romans had lost much of its classic purity. It was no longer the idiom of Cicero and of Horace. Familiar phrases, provincialisms and barbarisms had found their way into the written language. Thence it is that we find the illiterate expressions of the comic characters in Plautus and Terence occupying a place as legitimate words in the dictionaries of the Romance idioms.

When with the already decaying language of the fourth and fifth centuries the variegated dialects of the conquering barbarians were mingled, confusion became worse confounded and linguistic chaos seemed at hand. It need not be said that for artistic purposes this mongrel type of speech became totally unfit. But in the same measure as the

healthy, though uncultured, peoples of the North were destined to revivify the old institutions of Roman political life, their languages also added new vitality to the decaying forms of Roman speech. The chaos was a preparatory stage of amalgamation and new development. For the formation of languages, like any other natural process, is ruled by a strict law of decay and growth.

In the derivation of the Romance dialects from the common Latin mother-tongue, two main principles are observable. The German invaders, like all barbarous conquerors, soon adopted the speech of their more civilised subjects; but they adhered to certain terms and denominations of objects particularly familiar or dear to them. Thus the terms for warfare and many of its chief implements were characteristically retained by them. The French *guerre* and the Italian *guerra* are identical with the old High German *werra*, our *war*; and the title of highest dignity in the French army of the present day, *Maréchal* (mediæval Latin *mariscalcus*), means nothing but *shalc* (groom) of the mares.

The second cause of transformation and re-formation already inherent in the Latin language of the second and third centuries (A.C.) is what philologists term the analytic or dissolving principle. Synthetic or primitive languages indicate the declension of a noun or the conjugation of a verb by a modification of the word itself; analytical languages by the addition of other words. Thus, *patris* in Latin

answers to our three words *of the father*, or to the French *de le* (contracted *du*) *père*. The addition of the article subsequently makes the modification of the noun itself superfluous; hence *père* answers to the four modifications of the Roman *pater*. But the same tendency existed in the late-Latin speech itself, and the *de le père* presupposes a *de illo patre*. In an analogous manner, the *j'ai fait* or *ho fatto* of the French and Italian languages is beyond doubt derived from a Latin *habeo factum*, instead of the simpler and older *feci*.

Of the various languages of Latin growth, the Provençal was the first to attain to an independent characteristic type of expression. The limits of its domain have been variously defined; but it extended far beyond the boundaries of the later Provence, even beyond those of modern France, comprising, for instance, parts of Spain, such as Aragon, Valencia, Catalonia, and the Balearic Islands. Its northern limit may be roughly stated to be the line drawn from the mouth of the Gironde to that of the Saone. The political autonomy of the south of France, which secured it from the international and national troubles of its northern neighbour, greatly favoured peaceful progress and enjoyment of life. Moreover, the rich, bountiful soil, and the prosperity and natural gaiety of the inhabitants, were conducive to the early growth of poetic feeling; and it may be assumed that long before the time of the Troubadours, rustic lays, accompanied by the sounds of the viola, used to enliven the harvest homes of Provençal

villages. Of this popular epoch no record now remains, except the language itself—at once the result and embodiment of a nation's longing for utterance. The generic term applied to the language of southern France seems to have been 'Provençal,' in allusion no doubt to the Provincia Romana of the Cæsars. For this term we have the weighty authority of Dante, also that of an old Provençal grammar called 'Donatus Provincialis.' The Troubadours themselves, however, never use this perhaps more scientific denomination. They generally speak of Lengua Romana, a term which of course applies with equal propriety to all the languages derived from the Latin. But what do poets care about philological distinctions? Another term, *langue d'oc*, afterwards transferred to a province of France, was undoubtedly known in the middle ages. It is derived from the affirmative particle *oc*, i.e. 'yes,' and chiefly used to distinguish Provençal from its sister-languages, the *lingua di sì* (Italian) and the *langue d'oïl*, (northern French, *oïl=oui*). From the latter it was a totally distinct language both in grammar and pronunciation, quite as distinct, for instance, as Portuguese from Spanish, or Dutch from English. On the strength of the latter parallel the much-mooted question as to the possibility of conversation between Trouvère and Troubadour may perhaps receive some new light from an adventure of the late Mr. Buckle, who, while travelling in a railway carriage in Holland, addressed a gentleman in the language of the country, but received after a time the polite

answer that he, the Dutch gentleman, was sorry he did not understand—Italian.

The *langue d'oc* was again subdivided into numerous provincial dialects, but of these little or no trace appears in the songs of the Troubadours. For they were court poets, and the idiom they used a court language, spoken in its purity by no one beyond the magic circle of polite society. It seems, however, that the dialects of Limosin and the neighbouring districts, and of Provence proper, showed the nearest approach to this language of poets and courtiers. Such at least is the decided opinion of the grammarian and poet Raimon Vidal, not himself a native of those parts. 'Every person,' he says, 'who wants to produce or understand poetry, ought to know, first of all, that none is the natural and proper accent of our language but that of Limosin, Provence, Auvergne, and Quercy. Therefore I tell you, that when I speak of Limosin, you must understand all these countries and those that are near them or lie between them; and all people born or brought up in those parts have the natural and correct accent.'

The origin of the Provençal language can of course not be referred to a particular year nor even to a particular century. Its development was gradual and slow. But it is a remarkable fact, that after it had once taken literary form and substance, no signs of change or further growth are noticeable. Two centuries in the German or English, or indeed any living language, constitute enormous differences

as regards phraseology, orthography, and grammatical structure. Johnson had difficulties in fully understanding Shakespeare, a modern German is puzzled by many expressions in Luther's Bible; and this, after these languages had become fixed by the introduction of printing, and a generally acknowledged standard of grammatical regularity. But the first troubadour known to us, Guillem of Poitiers, born in 1071, uses exactly the same grammar, the same structure of sentences, and even in all essential points the same poetic diction, as his last successor two hundred years after him.[1] The cause of this unusual stability must be looked for in the fact already pointed out, that the Provençal was not, strictly speaking, a living language used by all, and for all purposes, but the exclusive speech of an exclusive class, reserved moreover for the expression of courteous love and chivalry. Even where, for the purposes of satire and personal invective, the terms of low life are introduced, they have to submit to the strict rules of grammar and metre.

At the end of the thirteenth century the *langue d'oc*, as a means of poetic utterance at least, disappears again, as suddenly almost as it had emerged from obscurity. Learned societies and scholarly poets and writers vainly tried to keep alive

[1] Even the oldest Provençal poem of importance known to us, a popular version of the story of Boethius, belonging, according to Raynouard, to the tenth century, shows in most essential points the same grammatical structure as the language of the Troubadours, barring such irregularities and archaisms as are fully accounted for by the age and origin of the work.

the interest which had vanished with the last of the knightly singers. *Jeux floraux* were started, and golden primroses rewarded the successful efforts of learned competitors. But the true life of poetry was gone. By the crusade against the Albigeois and the subsequent conquest of the French south by the north, the spirit of the Provençal nobility had been broken. No lordly castles invited, no gifts encouraged the Troubadour, and by his silence all vitality and zest was lost to the *langue d'oc*, which henceforth degenerated into a common patois ; the rapid intrusion of northern French idioms consequent on the political events alluded to accelerating its final doom—final, for all the attempts at reviving the old splendour of the *langue d'oc* have as yet proved abortive. The patois of Mistral's *Mireïo* has little in common with the language of the mediæval singers, and his gifted disciples' strenuous efforts stand little chance against the crushing influence of an idiom formed by Voltaire's prose and Alfred de Musset's poetry.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY POPULAR EPICS.

THE north of France was the birth country and chief seat of epic poetry in the Middle Ages. The *chanson de geste*, the *roman*, the *fabliau* frequently bear witness of a consummate grace of narrative diction. Even the lyrical effusions of the Trouvère not seldom take the form of the monologue or dialogue. The poet loves to hide his personality under the mask of a fictitious character. Sometimes he is the maiden longing for love and spring, who from the seclusion of her cloister raises her voice against the robbers of her liberty, *malois soit de deu ki me fist nonnete*; sometimes, like Rutebœuf, he listens to the vulgar quarrels of 'Charlie and the barber,' or, like Charles d'Orleans, the sweet chansonnier in French and English, holds converse with

> . . . l'amoureuse deesse
> Qui m'apela demandant ou j'aloye.

The narrative and dramatic instincts of modern French writers are distinctly manifest in their mediæval *confrères*.

This is different with the Troubadour, the poet of

Southern France. He is the lyrical singer *par excellence*, speaking in his own undisguised person and of his own subjective passion. Hence the truth and intensity, but hence also the monotonousness and conventional phraseology of passion, alternately characteristic of the Provençal love-song. But the narrative instinct was not entirely wanting in the poets of the *langue d'oc*. The great wave of epic song which kept continually crossing the Channel from the Celt to the French Norman, and back again to the Saxon and Anglo-Norman, left its flotsam on the shores of Southern France. Neither did the half-mystic glory of Charlemagne and his peers fail to impress the imagination of the chivalrous Troubadours. We possess, or at least know of the existence of, Provençal epics from both the Carlovingian and Arthurian circles. Although comparatively small in number and importance, these deserve a passing mention.

The epic poetry of southern, like and on the same principle as that of northern France, may be broadly divided into the popular, and the artistic or individual narrative. The two classes differ as widely as possible both as regards metrical form and poetical treatment. The popular epic was sung or chanted to a monotonous tune, the artistic recited. The former uses frequently the assonance (identity of vowels, but difference of consonants) in strophes or tirades of varying length; the latter, exclusively rhyme in couplets. The popular epic is fond of introducing standing formulas and epithets, and the

recurrence of similar situations or motives is marked by the naïve repetition of the identical phrase. The poet himself disappears behind his work; he is nothing but the mouthpiece of popular feeling and tradition. Different from this, the artistic poet takes individual shape in his work. He groups his material with conscious study of narrative effects, frequently adds new inventions to the legend he treats, and is fond of interrupting the narrative by reflections of his own, moral or otherwise as the case may be.

Of the popular epic very few specimens remain, and of these few one at least, the 'Ferabras,' seems a translation from the North-French. The representative poem of the class is the old Provençal epic, 'Girart de Rossilho,' a splendid example of early mediæval spirit, crude in sentiment and diction, coarse and irregular in its metrical structure, but powerful and of sterling quality, like the hero it celebrates. Like the 'Chanson de Roland'—the representative epic of Northern France—Girart de Rossilho belongs to the Carlovingian circle of legendary lore. But there is a considerable difference between the two poems as regards the conception of the Carlovingian idea, if that modern term may be allowed. The older French poem shows the great Emperor in full possession of his power, and surrounded by his loyal Peers. The younger Provençal epic reflects the revolutionary spirit of the great vassals under the weak descendants of the great Charles. Its hero, indeed, Girart of Rossilho, is the

head of these rebellious barons, and his brave deeds in the wars with his feudal lord are held up to admiration, while, on the other hand, the Emperor Charles Martel (evidently a mistake on the part of the minstrel for Charles the Bald, correctly reintroduced in a later French version) is made the embodiment of meanness and treachery. After perusing Girart's exploits, some of them of a rather doubtful character according to our notions, it is satisfactory to know that he at least departed life with a clean bill of morality. The author himself seems to feel somewhat uneasy on the subject. 'But,' he argues, 'if Girart did great evil at first, he made full and speedy compensation at last, for he did great penance in a cloister—which he himself built beautifully and at great cost.' There he is said to have supported amongst other pious personages 'one hundred maidens.' 'And the priests,' the manuscript continues, 'do nothing but pray God for him and the Lady Bertha his wife. And he gave them a thousand marks free of taxes; and one can see well that he means to go there.' Thus the Holy Church was the gainer, and having, as Mephistopheles says, 'a good stomach able to digest ill-gotten pelf,' she may, for all we know, have long rejoiced in the prosperity of the holy damsels. Whether Girart actually entered his pious institution the manuscript does not say; but such a close of such a career was by no means rare in the middle ages.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ARTISTIC EPIC.

THE remains of the artistic epic, although scanty, are more numerous than those of popular origin. They were held in greater estimation, and therefore naturally had a better chance of being saved from oblivion. Moreover, the fact of their being recited without the aid of music made the reference to a written text more desirable than was the case with the popular tales which were chanted to popular tunes, and for the sole enjoyment of popular and uncritical audiences, not likely to resent arbitrary variations or slips of memory. Amongst courtly productions might be named the celebrated 'Roman de Jauffre,' describing the love-affair of that knight with the beautiful Brunesen, and other adventures, also the story of Guillem de la Bar, not long ago made public by M. Paul Meyer, from the sole manuscript in the possession of the Marquis de la Grange. The author of the latter poem is Arnaut Vidal, remarkable as the first winner of the golden violet at the 'Jeux Floraux' of Toulouse; the prize being justly awarded to him for a sweet song in praise of the Virgin, still extant.

But all these attempts are thrown into the shade by a work which, quite apart from its philological and literary interest, is invaluable to the student of mediæval manners and customs. This is 'Flamenca,' a narrative poem in octosyllabic couplets, dating most likely from the first half of the thirteenth century. Copious extracts, and an analysis of the work, have been given by Raynouard in the first volume of his celebrated 'Lexique Roman,' and the whole has since been edited from the only manuscript in existence at Carcassonne, by M. Paul Meyer, who has added a translation into modern French (Paris, 1865). Unfortunately the beginning and the end of the poem are missing, and with the former the name of the author, frequently mentioned in the introductory lines of mediæval romances, has most probably been lost. It is therefore to an anonymous entity alone that we are able to concede the attributes of a scholar well versed in antique and contemporary literature, of a man of the world who knew the manners and morals of good society, and of a poet of genius.

The technical Provençal name of a poem like 'Flamenca' would be *nova*, and with a slight variation of the final syllable the word will serve the same turn in our language. For 'Flamenca' in all essential points answers to the definition of a novel. It is a picture of contemporary society in the same sense, and quite as close, as is 'Tom Jones' or 'Vanity Fair.' From the popular epic it naturally differs as widely as can be imagined, but

even with the other artistic romances of the same period it has little in common. These latter depend for their interest chiefly on a number of adventures more or less loosely strung together; in 'Flamenca' there is a plot in our modern sense, artistically worked up to a climax and illumined by cleverly drawn characters and psychological observations. It is indeed evidently the author's intention to delineate and point out the evil consequences of certain psychological phenomena, and in this respect 'Flamenca' might indeed almost be described as a 'novel with a purpose,' the 'purpose' leading the poet much beyond the limits of probability and narrative economy, as 'purposes' are apt to do. The plot of 'Flamenca,' moreover, is evidently a pure invention, while the poets of ordinary chivalrous romances always rely more or less on legendary sources.

Flamenca, the lovely daughter of Count Gui de Nemours, is wooed by the King of Hungary and by Lord Archimbaut Count of Bourbon. Her father prefers the latter suitor, who is said to be one of the best and most valorous knights in the world; an important circumstance which the reader is asked to remember. Count Archimbaut, on being told of the decision in his favour, makes preparations on the grandest scale to visit his bride, whom he has never seen, but of whom the descriptions of her beauty given by his messengers have deeply enamoured him. The festivities arranged for his reception at the court of Nemours are described at some length,

and give the poet an opportunity of deploring the decay of liberality amongst the great nobles, of courtesy, of love, and of chivalry in his own time, a complaint frequently met with in the works of the later troubadours.

Early on a Sunday morning Count Archimbaut is introduced by her father to Flamenca, who, like a well-educated young lady, 'did not pretend to be doleful, but was a little shamefaced.' 'Here is your bride,' Count Gui says; 'take her if you like.' 'Sir,' answers the bridegroom, 'if she does not gainsay it, I never was so willing to take anything in my life.' Then the lady smiled, and 'Sir,' she said, 'one can see that you hold me in your power, as you give me away so easily; but as it is your will I consent.' This 'I consent' throws Archimbaut into a transport of joy, and he presses her hand passionately. But here the interview ends. The gentlemen retire, Archimbaut taking leave of her with his eyes at the door, while Flamenca did not show pride, but gave him good countenance, frequently saying, 'God be with you!'

What can be prettier than this quaint picture of mediæval wooing, and what more magnificent than the wedding ceremony performed in the presence and with the assistance of five bishops and ten abbots, and lasting much too long for the impatience of Archimbaut, 'for it was past the sixth hour (noon) before he had married her'? At the banquet the bridegroom and the father of the bride have to wait at table according to ancient custom; but the eyes

of the former continually go where his heart is, and inwardly he curses the appetite of the guests and the long-winded songs of the joglars. After nine days' feasting he hurries home to prepare his house for his bride. All this looks auspicious enough for the happiness of the couple. But this bright beginning is but a clever trick on the narrator's part to show in its darkest dye the monstrous vice which turns brightness itself into night. This vice is jealousy.

The King of France, to do honour to his trusty baron Gui of Nemours, escorts Flamenca to her husband, and attends with his wife and his court the festivities arranged by Archimbaut to celebrate the occasion. At the tournament which takes place the king carries on the point of his lance, by way of *gage d'amour*, the sleeve of a lady's dress. 'I don't know whose it was,' the poet adds diplomatically. The queen's jealousy suggests Flamenca, and she loses no time to impart her suspicion to Archimbaut, who immediately takes fire at the thought. He keeps his countenance while his guests are present, but inwardly he feels sad, and tormented by 'a burning sickness called jealousy.' 'What was I thinking of,' he frequently says to himself, 'when I took a wife? God! I was mad. Was I not well off and happy before? Evil befall my parents that they should have counselled me to take what did never good to any man!'

The symptoms of the 'burning sickness' are described with graphic vivacity. Archimbaut shuts

himself up; in every visitor he suspects a suitor of his wife; he pretends to be very busy, and adds, in a whispered aside, 'I should like to kick you out head foremost.' He then calls to his servants for water, to wash for dinner, in order to make people go, and if this does not avail he will say, 'Dear sir, will you have dinner with us, for it is time? I hope you will. There will be a good opportunity for flirting'—looking all the while like a dog who shows his teeth.

So far so good; but we can hardly believe that a noble and gallant knight should lose all sense of decency so entirely as to go about unwashed and unshaven, letting his beard grow long and matted 'like a badly made sheaf of oats,' except in places where he had torn out the hair and stuffed it in his mouth. The poet here decidedly makes a concession to his courtly audience, who naturally were delighted to hear a jealous husband likened to a 'mad dog.'

At last Archimbaut resolves to keep his wife a close prisoner in a tower, and 'May I be hanged by the throat,' he says, 'if ever she go out without me even to church, to hear mass, and that only on high feast days!' So poor Flamenca is shut up in the tower with only two devoted maidens, Alice and Margarida, to comfort her in her misery. And here the poet takes the opportunity of indulging in a psychological excursion which one would expect in Feydeau or the younger Dumas rather than in a *romancier* of the thirteenth century. As she could

not love her husband and had no child to be fond of, he suggests, it was a blessing, or 'a great favour of God,' as he puts it, for Flamenca, that the feeling of love entirely ceased in her for a season. For if she still had had love in her heart with no object to centre it upon, her condition would have been infinitely more unhappy.

But Flamenca's fate is not to last, nor are Archimbaut's misdeeds to be left unpunished for ever. The avenger is nigh. He takes the form of a perfect beau of the period, described by the poet in the most glowing colours; with his riches, his valour, his courteous demeanour, his love of poetry and song, his scholarship—for he has gone through his *trivium* and *quadrivium* at the University of Paris—and last, not least, his beauty, down to the whiteness of his skin and the very shape of his mouth and ears. Guillem de Nevers, for such is his name, hears of Archimbaut's jealous atrocities, which have become the butt of all the gay troubadours of the country, and at once resolves to comfort the lady and punish the monster. The question is, how to baffle the watchfulness of this Argus and Cerberus combined. The manner in which this question is solved is a marvel of ingenuity.

The first and greatest difficulty is to establish communication with the imprisoned lady. The tower is watched against any possibility of approach, and she never leaves it except to go to church. The church, therefore, must be the scene of operations.

Guillem de Nevers ingratiates himself with the priest, who accepts him as his clerk, and in this disguise the lover succeeds in entering the private pew, from which, thickly veiled and concealed by a trellis work, Flamenca is allowed to attend mass. When the clerk approaches the lady to let her kiss the mass-book according to sacred rite, she is struck with his beauty, and still more astonished when, instead of a sacred formula, he breathes a suggestive *Ailas!* (alas). More than these two syllables he dares not utter in the presence of the watchful Archimbaut. Flamenca, on her return home, begins to muse on the strange behaviour of the clerk. At first she feels almost aggrieved by his exclamation. 'What right has he,' she says, 'to be miserable? he is strong, and free, and happy. Maybe he is mocking my own suffering. And why should he be so cruel as to add to my grief? Tears and sighs are my lot. A slave compelled to carry wood and water is enviable compared with me. My fate could not be worse even if I had a rival and a mother-in-law.' But the two chambermaids know better. With the sagacity of their class they at once fathom the mystery. 'Your beauty,' Margarida suggests, 'has ravished his heart, and, as he has no other way of speaking to you, he has exposed himself to great peril to let you know the state of his feelings.'

An answer has now to be thought of, and the united wisdom of the three fair conspirators decides upon the query *Que plans?* (what is your complaint?) and these two syllables, softly whispered, gladden

the heart of Guillem on the ensuing Sunday. His immoderate rapture on seeing his passion noticed by its fair object gives rise to a remark on the part of the poet which strangely foreshadows the celebrated dying speech of Cardinal Wolsey. 'If Guillem,' the passage runs literally, 'had served God as he served Love and his lady, he would have been lord of Paradise.'

Flamenca on her part is most anxious to be certain that her frightened whisper has been understood, and the poet describes with masterly touches a charming scene in the lady's closet, when Alice has to take a book—it is the romance of Blanchefleur—and hold it exactly in the position and at the distance that Guillem has presented the missal. The lady then bending over the pages whispers the two syllables, and inquires whether she has been heard, which question the obliging chambermaid answers with an 'Oh, certainly, Madam! if you have spoken in such a tone, he must have understood you.'

In this manner the lovers continue to correspond, a week elapsing between each question and answer, unless a devoutly wished-for saint's day shortens the interval. A lover who for months feeds his passion on dissyllables, sweetened only by an occasional lifting of Flamenca's veil or a furtive touch of her finger, deserves at any rate the praise of constancy. Does the reader care to hear the dialogue in which this extraordinary intrigue is carried on? Here is the series of questions and answers, divided, it must

be remembered, by an interval of several days, and exchanged under the very eyes of the jealous husband, who mistakes for pious mutterings of the Catholic ritual what in reality is offered at a very different shrine :—

Guillem, in answer to Flamenca's question above cited: *Muer mi* (I die). Flamenca: *De que?* (what of?) G.: *D'amor* (of love). F.: *Per cui?* (for whom?) G.: *Per vos* (for you). F.: *Quen puesc?* (how can I help it?) G.: *Garir* (heal me). F.: *Consi?* (how?) G.: *Per gein* (by subtle craft). F.: *Pren li* (use it). G.: *Pres l'ai* (I have). F.: *E cal?* (what craft?) G.: *Iretz* (you must go). F.: *Es on?* (where to?) G.: *Als banz* (to the baths).

This requires a word of explanation. Bourbon in Auvergne, the seat of Count Archimbaut, was then, as it is now, a well-known spa, of the arrangements of which the author gives rather a curious description. 'Here,' he says, 'every one, stranger or native, can bathe in excellent fashion. In each bath-room you can see written up for what malady it is good. No lame or gouty person would come there but he would go away quite cured, provided he stopped long enough. Here one can bathe when he likes, provided he have come to terms with the landlord who lets the bath. And in each of the cells there is to be found boiling water, and in another part cold. . . . Adjoining these baths are rooms where people can lie down and rest and refresh themselves as they like.' There is also a capital portrait of the typical lodging-house keeper, who—

wonderful touch of nature which makes Margate and Bourbon kin—recommends a particular room 'because Count Raoul takes it every time he comes to Bourbon.'

With this worthy and his wife, dame Bellepille, Guillem has made himself exceedingly popular. He has paid his bills without haggling, has dined at their table, and taken absinthe (*de bon aluisne*) with the husband. At last he has persuaded the couple to decamp for a season and leave him in sole possession of their house—for a consideration, it need hardly be added. This house he has had connected by a subterraneous passage with one of the bathing cells, and to the latter Flamenca is summoned by the mysterious phrase alluded to. The lady understands the hint, and at once takes the necessary measures for carrying out the scheme. She feigns sleeplessness and pain—nothing but a bath can cure her. Archimbaut, anxious for her safety, gives his consent, and himself conducts her to the arms of her expectant lover, who receives her with knightly courtesy and leads her, together with the two faithful damsels, through his subterraneous passage to a room splendidly adorned to receive such a visitor. The jealous husband in the meantime keeps watch before the door of the bath-room, with the key in his pocket, while the careful damsels have not forgotten to bolt the door inside.

Such is the just and inevitable punishment of jealousy according to the doctrine of the Troubadours. But, strangely enough, this punishment,

unknown to himself though it be, ultimately works Archimbaut's cure. He notices the change in his wife's manner; she shows no affection for him, and even neglects the ordinary forms of politeness. At last he gets tired of his suspicions, and accepts a compromise proposed by his ill-treated wife to the effect that the lady is to be restored to liberty on her own solemn promise of faithfulness to her husband. And here I fear that poor Flamenca will forfeit the claim to the reader's lenient sympathy to which the cruelty of her husband has hitherto entitled her. With a virtuosity of mental reservation worthy of any Jesuit she swears by all the saints and in the presence of her inwardly chuckling damsels that 'henceforth I will guard myself quite as well as you (Archimbaut) have hitherto guarded me.' On this happy turn in her affairs the lady takes leave of her lover for a season. He must resume his rank and add to his fame by new deeds of valour. But she agrees to see him again at a tournament which Archimbaut proposes to hold in celebration of his happy recovery. In answer to his lady's command, Guillem goes to the war and makes the country ring with his prowess. Archimbaut becomes acquainted with him and eagerly invites him to attend at his feast, where he himself introduces the valorous and renowned young knight to his wife. The lovers keep their countenance and greet each other in distant politeness, but in secret they meet again and renew their bliss. At the tournament Guillem carries all before him, but second to him

alone shines Archimbaut, who has become again the valorous and accomplished knight he was before the fell disease attacked him. In the midst of their joustings and feastings the manuscript breaks off, evidently not long before the end of the poem.

Such is the story of Flamenca. Its moral tone is not very high, although certainly not worse than that of the typical French novel. But few modern novelists would successfully compete with the natural grace and perfect workmanship of the mediæval poet. The plot, although simple, is well constructed, and the story developes itself rapidly and consistently. The characters also are drawn with consummate skill. They are both types and individuals, one of the chief criteria of high art-creation. It is true that the effects of jealousy on Archimbaut are exaggerated to the verge of caricature : the poet here bowed to the prejudice of his age. At the same time the minutest symptoms of the disease are laid bare with an astounding acuteness of psychological diagnosis. But, more than all, there is true passion in the work in spite of occasional concessions to the allegorical and hyperbolical tendencies of romantic feeling. And the whole is transfused with the splendour of southern sunshine, the joy and life and love of beautiful Provence.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OTHER NARRATIVE AND DIDACTIC POEMS.

'FLAMENCA' is unequalled in mediæval literature for natural eloquence of diction and psychological subtlety; in the *langue d'oc*, more especially, there is nothing worthy of being mentioned by the side of it. We possess, however, some shorter stories well invented and gracefully told, as for instance an amusing novelette in verse by Raimon Vidal of Besaudun, the tendency of which may be easily guessed by its title 'Castia-Gilos,' or 'Jealousy Punished.' Another quaint story, the 'Lay of the Parrot,' by Arnaut de Carcasse, also deserves mention. A poem called by its anonymous author a 'roman' would answer better to our term 'allegory.' It contains an elaborate description of the abode of Love, at whose court Joy, Comfort, Hope, Courtesy, and other symbolical personages, collectively described as the 'Barons of Love,' make their appearance. A hundred beautiful damsels, each with her lover, enliven the scene, and to this gay parliament the god holds forth in a long speech full of wholesome information and counsel in accordance with the most approved code of Provençal gallantry.

This work marks the transition from the story to the didactic poem, of which latter class the 'Essenhamen de la Donzela,' or 'Advice to a Young Lady,' by Amanieu des Escas, is the most celebrated specimen. The teaching of good manners is not a very lively task, and it must be admitted that the Troubadours have at least shown considerable ingenuity in hiding the pedantry of their rules and prescripts under a whole flower-bed of pretty allegorical devices. Of Amanieu des Escas we shall hear again. It need hardly be added that these codifications of good manners, just like the grammatical and metrical treatises of which Provençal literature can show a respectable number, belong to a comparatively late period, when courtesy and refined speech began to fade from the living intercourse of men.

The next section of narrative poetry to which brief reference must be made differs widely from the works hitherto mentioned. It is the historic epic or rhymed chronicle, two specimens of which, important alike from the literary and the historic point of view, are extant. The first gives an account of a war waged in the kingdom of Navarre between 1276–77. It has been edited from the only existing manuscript, with excellent notes, by M. Francisque Michel in 1856. A Spanish edition was published seven years previously at Pampeluna. The author is one Guillem Auclier, of Toulouse in Languedoc, as stated at the beginning of the poem. He was himself an active partisan in the war, and gives a lively descrip-

tion of the events he witnessed. Frequent episodes relating to contemporary events, such as the expedition of St. Louis against Tunis, furnish details of great historic interest. The literary character of the poem, however, does not essentially differ from similar mediæval productions, and a detailed analysis may therefore be dispensed with. Metrically it is interesting as an early specimen of the Alexandrine or dodecasyllabic verse, which appears here in so-called 'tirades monorimes' of fifty lines, a shorter verse at the end of each tirade serving to connect it with the following strophe. At other times this shorter line is literally repeated at the commencement of the next tirade—an interesting peculiarity, characteristic of Provençal poems of this class, which betrays strong feeling for metrical continuity. It is, however, not improbable that the musical accompaniment to which these poems were chanted made a repetition of the final cadence desirable. A not uninteresting literary controversy has been raised as to the identity of the author of the present poem with a troubadour of the same name and birthplace of whom we possess four political songs of considerable power. Millot doubts this identity on account of a passage in one of the songs which speaks of a young Englishman desirous to regain all that the valiant Richard had possessed in France. Millot, who knew little Provençal, misunderstands the passage in the sense of Richard being mentioned as still alive; in which case the author of the song could of course not have described, and been eye-

witness of, events which took place nearly a century after the death of the lion-hearted king. But Millot's supposition is quite erroneous, and the young Englishman alluded to is evidently King Edward I., whose accession (1272) seems to have roused expectations to be temporarily realised under his grandson. That the aspirations of the Black Prince, and later on of Henry V., should have been foreshadowed at this early period, is undoubtedly an important fact to the student of English history—one of the numerous important facts, indeed, which might be gleaned from the works of the Troubadours, and which make the total neglect of these works amongst us so unaccountable.

Of much greater importance than the Navarrese chronicle is the celebrated song of the crusade against the Albigeois heretics and their chief protector, Count Raimon of Toulouse. The author or authors (for most probably there were two) of this poem also were contemporaries and eye-witnesses of many of the incidents of this cruel war, the ultimate issue of which proved fatal to the literary and political independence of the south of France. A fuller account of this work will be found where we come to consider the prominent part taken by the Troubadours in the vital struggle of their country.

In connection with the chronicle of the Albigeois crusade may be mentioned the only poem of importance which the *langue d'oc* contributed to the spirited dogmatic controversy incessantly carried on

between the heretics and the champions of the Church. The little interest taken by the Troubadours in the doctrinal aspect of the case may account for this paucity of documents.[1] A great number of heretical writings have undoubtedly been destroyed by the intolerant rage of monks and inquisitors, but it is by no means certain that many, or indeed any, of these were written by, or in the language of, the Troubadours. If so, one cannot but wonder why the violent attacks on the moral depravity of the clergy, with which Provençal literature is teeming, should have escaped the same fate.

The poem I am speaking of certainly leaves nothing to be desired as regards orthodoxy. It is written by Izarn, a monk, and a more striking specimen of monkish effrontery would be looked for in vain in any literature. So grotesque indeed is the cynicism displayed, that one almost suspects an ironical sceptic cleverly disguised in the mask of the zealot; but there are other features of the poem—little touches, for instance, of vanity and unctuous self-laudation—which place the author's real purpose beyond a doubt. The 'Novas del Heretge,' or 'Tale of the Heretic,' is written in the form of a dialogue between the author and one Sicart de Figueiras, apparently an important member, or, as he calls himself, a 'bishop,' of the Albigeois sect.

[1] The religious poems of the Vaudois, especially the celebrated 'Noble Lesson,' a medley of moral and dogmatic precepts, do not concern us, they being both by language and tendency entirely removed from the sphere of artistic literature.

The opening lines are important to the historian of theology. They prove that the Neo-Manichean heretics believed, or at least were said by the Catholics to believe, in something very like metempsychosis. 'Tell me,' the monk begins, 'in what school you have learned that the spirit of man, when it has lost its body, enters an ox, an ass, or a horned wether, a hog or a hen, whichever it sees first, and migrates from one to the other until a new body of man or woman is born for it? . . . This thou hast taught to deluded people whom thou hast given to the devil and taken away from God. May every place and every land that has supported thee perish!' This style of spiritual vituperation was likely to prove but too effective, being as it was enforced by very material means of coercion. For the conversation, as we gather from the next-following lines, takes place in one of the prisons of the sacred tribunal. 'The fire is alight,' Izarn continues; 'the people are assembled to see justice done, and if you refuse to confess you will certainly be burnt.' Motives of much less force would be sufficient to overcome the resistance of the worthy Sicart. His conscientious scruples are indeed of the very slightest description; he is anxious only about the terms of his capitulation. 'Izarn,' he says, 'if you assure me and give securities that I shall not be burnt or immured or otherwise destroyed, I don't care what other punishment you may inflict; only save me from that.' But he knows his captors too well to expect his life from motives of pity. Treachery is the price of his

safety, and of that commodity he offers liberal measure. 'Berit,' he says, 'and Peire Razol' (two other spies, it may be conjectured) 'don't know half of what I do. I will tell you everything you ask both about believers and heretics, but you must promise me secrecy.' Next follows a somewhat rambling explanation of the cause of his desertion, in which the souls of five hundred people whom he claims to have rescued from eternal perdition play a principal part. But he is particularly anxious to impress upon the monk that poverty has not been the motive of his action. 'First of all,' he says, 'I want you to know that I have not presented myself to you owing to hunger or thirst, or from any need whatsoever; pray be aware of that.'

The meaning of all this is that he wants to point out, as indeed he does afterwards in so many words, how valuable an acquisition he would be, and how glad the Church of Rome ought to be to receive him on terms however favourable. This seems reasonable enough, but the matter appears in a very different light when he begins to describe with glowing colours the treasures which his confidential position amongst the heretics has placed at his disposal. An account of the easy and luxurious life he led amongst the heretics is evidently inserted with a view to disparage and expose as hypocritical pretence the appearance of rigorous morality assumed, and in most cases no doubt justly assumed, by the elders of the dissenting churches. But all these comforts and enjoyments, Sicart declares, he has for-

saken for the call of Heaven, interpreted to him by the eloquent voice of that chosen vessel, Izarn—the author, that is. The complacency with which the monk by the mouth of his convert pays a compliment to his own theological sagacity, mentioning especially 'nine questions' which have completely baffled the heretic, and not omitting at the same time an incidental reference to his poetical gift, is as amusing as it is characteristic. It furnishes, moreover, the best proof against the suspicion of a hidden satirical purpose, which the tone of the poem may have excited in the reader's mind. The subtlest humorist could not artificially reproduce the naïve genuineness of this self-praise. No wonder that, convinced by such excellent argument, Sicart is willing to atone for former errors by the merciless persecution of his late friends and co-religionists. 'Not twopennyworth of love or peace shall they find at my hands,' he savagely exclaims, promising at the same time to betray to the Inquisition the most secret places where they and their treasures are hidden—all sentiments highly and unctuously approved of by the excellent Izarn, it need scarcely be added.

No more barefaced disclosure of the vilest motives of the human heart can well be imagined than is to be found in this poem. 'Mr. Sludge the medium' himself would hesitate before entering into competition with the worthy monk and his no less desirable convert. If the utterly demoralising influence of religious persecution on both persecutors

and at least the weaker part of their victims needed further proof in our days, this poem might be held up as a warning example.

It is perhaps hardly fair to mention together with such a production other works by monkish authors sometimes replete with simple-minded piety and never without the quaint charm of mediæval narrative. Such are the paraphrases of Biblical and other religious legends of which Provençal literature shows a goodly array. None of them, however, calls for detailed notice, their character showing no essential deviation from similar works in other languages, and their subject and treatment being widely remote from the artistic poetry with which this book is chiefly concerned. Suffice it to mention the names of some of the saints chosen for treatment, such as St. Alexius, St. Honorat, and Sta. Fides, (the MS. of the last-mentioned legend dating, according to Fauchet, as far back as the eleventh century), also rhymed paraphrases of the apocryphal gospels of 'St. Nicodemus,' and the 'Infancy of Christ.'

Of much greater importance than any of these is a semi-religious didactic poem treating of that favourite hero of the pseudo-historic Muse in the middle ages, Boethius, and the spiritual comfort he derived in his worldly misfortune from what Shakespeare, perhaps with a faint reminiscence of this very man, calls 'adversity's sweet milk philosophy.' The goddess of that divine science appears to Boethius, 'Count of Rome,' in prison, to which he has been

sent by the Emperor Teiric (Theodoric), a usurper and unbeliever whose claims to the throne the single-hearted statesman refuses to acknowledge, and whose vices he has publicly reprimanded. Boethius is condemned on a false charge of having invited the Greeks to invade Rome. In his dungeon he laments his fate and regrets his sins, an opportunity for moralising of which the poet avails himself by enforcing the didactic keynote of his poem: 'The good and evil deeds of our youth find their just reward in advanced age.'

The darkness of the prison is suddenly brightened by the appearance of a beautiful maiden clad in garments of resplendent richness. She is the daughter of a mighty king, and her own power and gifts are without measure. 'Beautiful is the lady,' the poet repeats, 'although her days have been many; no man can hide himself from her glance.' She herself has woven her gorgeous robes, 'one fringe of which could not be bought for a thousand pounds of silver.' At the bottom of her garment is inscribed the Greek letter *Π*, while her headdress shows a *Θ*, the former signifying, according to the poet, 'the life which is entire,' the latter 'the just law of heaven.' A number of birds ascending steps which are suspended between the two letters signify mankind in its struggle for divine righteousness. Some more allegory of the same kind finishes the poem, which is evidently the fragment of a much larger work, founded possibly on the celebrated 'Consolatio Philosophiæ.'

The value of the fragment as it stands is of a philological rather than of a literary kind, owing to the numerous archaic forms and words occurring in it, many of which have disappeared from the later Provençal. With the exception of a short hymn in praise of St. Eulalia (published by Diez in his admirable edition of the work under discussion), 'Boethius' is generally considered to be the earliest poetic specimen of the *langue d'oc*, belonging, as it undoubtedly does, to the tenth century, and therefore preceding the first of the Troubadours by at least a hundred years. Of the remainder of the didactic poems the briefest notice must suffice. One class of them are large accumulations of human knowledge —encyclopædias in fact without the alphabetical arrangement—such as the 'Tezaur' (Treasure) by Master Corbiac, treating in Alexandrine lines of most known and unknown sciences, including geology, music, history, and necromancy; and the still more celebrated 'Breviari d'Amor,' an enormous compendium of mediæval wisdom, and most probably one of the most ponderous books ever written in spite of its promising title. Two manuscripts of this work are in the British Museum. The author's name is Matfre Ermengau, a monk of Beziers, and the poem was begun, according to a statement in the preface, in 1288. How long it took the laborious poet to compose his 27,000 lines, heaven only knows. A poem by Daude de Pradas on the birds used for falconry, belonging to this

class, may be of some interest to historically minded lovers of sport.

But of much greater importance, and indeed invaluable to the student of manners and customs, is a second category of didactic poetry, consisting of rules and precepts of demeanour for certain classes of society, young ladies, pages, joglars or minstrels, and others. Some of these 'ensenhamens,' as they were called—for instance, that by Amanieu des Escas —have already been referred to in these pages. Others will be mentioned in due course.

In the poems of the historic and didactic orders rhyme and metre were to a great extent mere accessories, and of many of them prose versions, made evidently for the sake of cheapness and convenience, are actually in existence, such as the transcription of the Song of the Albigeois Crusade, also of the Gospel of Nicodemus, and other legendary poems. These and numerous other prose works, theological, moral, medical, and juridical,[1] are entirely beyond

[1] A curious collection of all imaginable law cases, called 'Albres de Batalhas,' or 'Tree of Contention,' and written most likely originally in French, may be mentioned as throwing a curious though faint light on a recent controversy. One of the fictitious actions is between a Frenchman and a licentiate of London who has come to Paris to take his degree in the celebrated university of that city, a case of frequent occurrence, although 'as every one knows the Kings of France and England are always at war with each other.' In answer to some argument of the Englishman his antagonist exclaims in his boisterous way: 'We Frenchmen don't care about your laws or the *emperor* who made them.' What better precedent could the advocates of Queen Victoria's new title demand than this testimony of an

the scope of the present work—with one exception. This is a curious collection of biographies of the principal troubadours found in several manuscripts, and varying from a few lines of matter-of-fact information to lengthy and circumstantial accounts of a suspiciously romantic character, including attempts at furnishing a commentary, critical and anecdotal, for single poems. In some cases several biographies of the same poet are found, one richer than another in interesting details, and showing evidently the desire on the part of later authors to improve upon an originally simple story. But in spite of this the immense value and general authenticity of this source cannot be denied, especially in cases where the author gives his name and declares himself an eye-witness of the events he describes. At the end of the biography of Bernard de Ventadorn, we read, for instance, the following interesting notice:—'Count Eble de Ventadorn, the son of the viscountess whom Sir Bernard loved, told me Uc de St. Cyr what I have caused to be written down of Sir Bernard.' The same Uc de St. Cyr, himself a well-known troubadour, also wrote (or at least composed, for his powers as a scribe may seem doubtful on his own showing[1]) the life of Savaric de Mauleon and probably of several other contemporary poets.

enemy, who curiously enough speaks of his own monarch as the king?

[1] In one passage, it is true, he uses the words, 'que ay escrichas questas razos,' 'I who have written these things,' but that may be a shorter way for saying 'dictated,' which the expression in the text evidently indicates.

Another biography is claimed by one Miquel de la Tor, and in many other instances references to eye-witnesses, or claims to personal and immediate knowledge, are made. Unfortunately accounts of only 104 out of about 400 troubadours of whose existence we know have been preserved. But even as it is we ought to be thankful to the mediæval scribes, who, as regards the Troubadours, have at least partially removed the darkness which overhangs, for instance, the personal histories of North-French Trouvères or German Minnesingers, not to name more recent and infinitely more important epochs of English literature.

# CHAPTER V.

## APOCRYPHA.

HERE the brief summary of the non-lyrical literature in the Provençal language comes to a close. In a work mainly devoted to the poetry of the Troubadours I have not thought it necessary to attempt anything like completeness of enumeration, my intention being mainly to give the reader some idea of the general aspect of a literary epoch almost entirely engrossed by one branch of art, the artistic song. A prevailing impulse of this kind is of course by no means unexampled in the history of poetry. The gregariousness of human beings in general is equally noticeable in the representatives of human thought and feeling. The age of Homer loved epic breadth, that of Elizabeth dramatic point and action; in our time the novel seems to rule the literary market. There were, of course, English romance-writers in the sixteenth century, just as there are English dramatists and lyrical poets of great power in the latter half of the nineteenth; but that does not in either case disprove the fact of a collective national instinct in the direction pointed out.

In the same sense it may be said that narrative poetry in mediæval Provence occupied a decidedly subordinate position. This is, at least, what the facts we know and the documents we possess lead us to believe. But documents and facts are not always satisfactory materials to prop up a preconceived theory. Certain scholars have in the face of them supplied the *langue d'oc* with an extensive and splendid epical literature, the treasures of which have unfortunately been lost to us, though why this loss should have fallen on the narrative in preference to the lyrical branch of poetry is not explained. The chief upholder of this opinion is the late M. Fauriel, the deservedly celebrated author of the 'Histoire de la Littérature Provençale;' but the foundation on which he rests his theory must be owned to be of the slenderest kind.

Among the *ensenhamens*, or instructions to particular classes of society, already mentioned, there are two, by Guiraut de Calençon and Guiraut de Cabreiras respectively, addressed to joglars, a class of singers, and professors of other more or less dignified arts, of whose duties and position in society we shall hear more hereafter. Amongst other accomplishments they are exhorted to acquire familiar acquaintance with certain favourite subjects of romance and story, a full enumeration of which is given in each instance.[1] These two poems, together with a

[1] In the second-mentioned poem the instruction takes the whimsical form of a reproof to a joglar for *not* knowing the various subjects mentioned in the text. 'I will tell you the truth without

passage from 'Flamenca,' descriptive of a feast enlivened by song, give us a most welcome insight into the tales of woe and joy most apt to raise tears or merry laughter amongst the fair ladies of Provence. Here we meet with the names of many heroes of history and fiction. King Menelaus and his frail spouse, together with most of the renowned chieftains of the Greeks and Trojans, represent Homeric myth, Romulus and Remus prehistoric Roman tradition. Queen Dido, it need hardly be said, occupies a prominent place, as does also her singer Virgil, whom mediæval belief has surrounded with the necromancer's mysterious halo in addition to his fame as a poet. Charlemagne and his champions—not forgetting Ganelon the traitor—were equally well known in Provence, while the influence of Celtic legendary lore, both with regard to poetry and music, is curiously illustrated by the mention in 'Flamenca' of a joglar who plays on the violin the *lais del cabrefoil* (lay of the honeysuckle) popularly ascribed to Tristan, the lover of Iseult. In addition to these another Instruction may be mentioned, addressed by one Arnaut Guillem de Marsan to a young gentleman of noble lineage who comes from a distance to consult him about amorous matters. Here the knowledge of the favourite subjects of romance is recommended as an accomplishment most adapted to gain the favour of a lady.

From such passages as these M. Fauriel concludes

a lie,' the ingenuous poet opens his diatribe; 'you are a bad fiddler and worse singer from beginning to end.'

that of all the subjects mentioned in them elaborate treatments in the shape of epics or romances existed in the *langue d'oc.* But this supposition surely is quite unsupported by the evidence direct or indirect. The myths and semi-historic facts referred to, such as the deeds of Charlemagne or King Arthur, were the common stock of European nations in the Middle Ages, migrating from the Welsh shores of the Atlantic to the eastern confines of Germany, and back again to Saxo-Norman England. Trouvères, Troubadours, and Minnesingers were equally well acquainted with these inexhaustible sources of amusement, and a wayfaring minstrel was naturally expected to give a more or less original version of the familiar theme. But none of the passages mentioned above refers to any existing poem on the subjects it enumerates, or indeed to any written document at all, which latter, moreover, in nine cases out of ten would have been of little use to the popular singer. The existence, therefore, of an extensive epical literature in the Provençal language remains a mere conjecture in spite of M. Fauriel's eloquent special pleading.

There is, however, no reason to deny that more than one narrative poem may have fallen a victim to time, and in some instances at least we have strong circumstantial evidence pointing that way. One of these cases leads to considerations so interesting in other respects that a short statement of it may be welcome to the reader. It is well known that the works of the Troubadours were at an early period read and admired in the neighbouring coun-

try of Italy, and that the poets in the *lingua volgare* recognised in them at once their models and allies in the struggle against the predominance of Latin scholarship. Students of the 'Divina Commedia' or of Petrarch's 'Trionfi' are aware of the prominent position assigned to the Provençal singers amongst the poets of the world, and they may also remember that of the Troubadours themselves none is mentioned with higher praise than Arnaut Daniel. Petrarch calls him *gran maestro d'amore*, the 'great master of love, whose novel and beautiful style still (i.e. about the middle of the fourteenth century) does honour to his country;' and Dante, in his philological and metrical treatise 'De vulgari Eloquio,' declares himself indebted to Arnaut for the structure of several of his stanzas. The 'sestina,' for instance, a poem of six verses in which the final words of the first stanza appear in inverted order in all the others, is an invention of this troubadour adopted by Dante and Petrarch, and, most likely through the medium of French models, by Mr. Swinburne, as we shall presently see.

But another far more lasting monument has been erected to Arnaut in the immortal lines of the 'Purgatorio,' where Guido Guinicelli, in answer to Dante's enthusiastic praise of his poetry, points to another shade, and

> 'O frate, disse, questi ch' io ti scerno
> Col dito (ed additò uno spirto innanzi)
> Fu miglior fabbro del parlar materno.
> Versi d' amor e prose di romanzi
> Soverchiò tutti . . .
>
> Canto xxvi., verses 115–119.

'O brother,' cried he, pointing with his hand,
'This spirit whom I show far better knew
To weld the language of his native land.
In lays of love and in romances too
He bore the palm.' . . .

(CAYLEY's translation.)

This artful 'smith of his mother-tongue' is our troubadour, who, when addressed, replies in pure Provençal, a language evidently quite familiar to Dante. The above-cited lines are generally considered to be the clue to the apparently excessive admiration lavished on Arnaut by the Italian poets. There can indeed be no doubt that, in addition to his fame as a lyrical singer or troubadour proper, his equal excellence as a narrative poet is here referred to, the word '*prose*' being used not in our modern sense, but for the rhymed couplets of the epic in contradistinction to the elaborate stanzas or *versi* of the love-song.

The further question arises, what were the works on which Arnaut's reputation as an epical poet was founded, and for the answer to this question we again must look in the works of Italian poets. Pulci, the humorous author of the 'Morgante Maggiore,' mentions our troubadour twice amongst the writers of Carlovingian epics, explaining his statement by the further indication that he (Arnaut) 'wrote most diligently and investigated the deeds of Rinaldo (i.e. Renaut de Montauban, the eldest of the *quatre fils Aimon*) and the great things he did in Egypt.' This seems to prove conclusively that as late as the end of the fifteenth century, when Pulci

wrote, an epic poem on 'Renaut' by Arnaut Daniel was known amongst scholars in Italy.[1]

But a still later and in one sense still more important testimonial to Arnaut is found in Torquato Tasso, who, it appears, mentions him as the author of a poem on 'Lancelot.' For this enables us to connect our troubadour with a second and perhaps the divinest passage in Dante's divine poem. The reader need scarcely be reminded that the story which kindles to open and conscious flame the silent passion of Francesca da Polenta and Paolo Malatesta is a romance of Lancelot—

> Di Lancilotto come amor lo strinse;

and nothing is more probable than that Dante should have thought of Arnaut Daniel's lost epic when he wrote the inspired lines that are in everybody's memory.

> Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
> Quella lettura, e scollorocci 'l viso;
> Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse;
> Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
> Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
> Questi che mai di me non fia diviso
> La bocca mi bacciò tutto tremante.
> Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse;
> Quel giorno più non vi legemmo avante.

> More than one time that reading struck our eyes
> Together, and discoloured us in face:
> But it was only one point conquered us:
> Whereas we read about the longed-for smile
> How by so great a lover it was kissed,

[1] Pulci says that Angelo Poliziano called his attention to Arnaut's work, in acknowledgment evidently of what he considered a remarkable antiquarian achievement.

This one, who from me ne'er shall be disjoined,
Trembling all over, kissed me on the mouth.
A Galahalt[1] was the book, and he that writ:
Further that day we read in it no more.
(W. M. ROSSETTI's translation.)

Many poets might wish to rest their posthumous fame on such lines rather than on their own works; but it may be inferred on the other hand that Arnaut Daniel (if he really be the author referred to) must have been a mighty mover of the heart to gain such a tribute from the lips of Francesca da Rimini.

It may seem strange that the Provençal biography is completely silent with regard to Arnaut's epical achievements. But, in the best times at least, the professional story-teller was strictly divided from the Troubadour, and the biographer may have thought it wiser to say nothing on the subject. With reference to the same matter it is perhaps significant that Arnaut is described as a 'joglar' in the Provençal notice of his life. In Italy this point of etiquette was, of course, of no importance; and hence most likely the indirect channel through which Arnaut's fame as a writer of romance has reached posterity.

It must be confessed, however, that the Troubadour's lyrical efforts would hardly lead one to credit him with lucid exposition or narrative grace. Arnaut Daniel is the Browning of Provençal literature. He delights in 'motz oscurs' (dark words) and 'rims cars' (dear or scarce rhymes) and equally far-fetched similes. One of these latter, a

[1] 'Galahalt' was the go-between of the Queen and her lover. The word became nationalised in Italian as equivalent to 'Pandar.'

symbol of unrequited love, became almost proverbially attached to his name. 'I am Arnaut,' it ran, 'who loves the air, who hunts a hare with an ox, and swims against the stream.' His intentional obscurity and his mannerism were largely imitated, but no less frequently attacked and travestied by contemporary poets and satirists. Petrarch's allusions to 'his novel speech,' and Dante's expression, 'smith of his mother-tongue,' evidently allude to Arnaut's peculiarities of style. We can also quite understand how the great Florentine could admire a dark shade of melancholy, a bold originality of thought, and a hankering after scholastic depth, but too nearly akin to his own mental attitude; but how far these qualities would have fitted into the frame of a narrative, or whether the poet succeeded in dropping them for a season, must remain an open question. It is curious that one of the brightest and most amusing bits of literary gossip which Provençal biography can show is attached to the sombre figure of this troubadour. As there will be no occasion in the following pages to return to the biography of Arnaut, the clever little anecdote may follow here. It will serve at the same time as a specimen of Provençal prose. A literal translation is subjoined:

'E fo aventura qu'el fo en la cort del rei Richart d'Englaterra: et estan en la cort us autres ioglars escomes lo com el trobava en pus caras rimas qe el. Arnautz tenc so ad escarn e feron messios cascus de son palafre qe no fera, en poder del rei. E'l reis

enclaus cascun en una cambra. E'N Arnautz de fastic quen ac non ac poder qe lasses un mot ab autre. Lo joglars fes son cantar leu e tost. Et els non avian mas de X jorns d'espazi; e devia s jutjar per lo rei a cap de cinq jorns. Lo joglars demandet a'N Arnaut si avia fag; e'N Arnautz respos; "qe oc, passat a tres jorns." E non avia pensat. E'l joglars cantava tota nueg sa canso per so qe be la saubes; e'N Arnautz pesset col traisset ad escarn, tan qe venc una nueg e'l joglars la cantava e'N Arnautz la va tota retener e'l so. E can foron denan lo rei, N'Arnautz dis qe volia retraire sa canso; e comenset mot be la canso qe'l joglars avia facha. E'l joglars can l'auzic gardet lo en la cara e dis q'el l'avia facha. E'l reis dis co s podia far? E'l joglars preguet al rei q'el ne saubes lo ver. E'l reis demandet a'N Arnaut com era stat. E'N Arnautz comtet li com era stat. E'l reis ac ne gran gaug e tenc so a gran escarn. E foron acquistat los gatges, et a cascun fes donar bels dos.'

'And it happened that he (Arnaut Daniel) was at the court of King Richard of England; and there being also at the court another joglar the latter boasted that he could invent rhymes as scarce as could Arnaut. Arnaut thought this good fun, and each gave his horse as a pledge to the king, in case he could not do it (viz. gain the bet). And the king locked them up each in a room. And Sir Arnaut, being tired of the matter, was not able to string one word to another; the joglar made his song with ease and speedily. And they had no more than a space of

ten days allowed to them. And the king was to judge at the end of five days. The joglar then asked Sir Arnaut if he had done. "Oh yes," said Sir Arnaut, "three days ago." But he had not thought of it. And the joglar sang his song every night so as to know it well. And Arnaut thought how he could draw him into ridicule; so one night, while the joglar was singing, Arnaut took care to remember the whole song and the tune. And when they were before the king, Arnaut declared that he wished to sing his song, and began to sing in excellent style the song that the joglar had made. And the joglar, when he heard this, stared him in the face, and declared that he himself had made the song. And the king asked how this was possible, but the joglar implored him to look into the truth of it. The king then asked Sir Arnaut how this had happened, and Sir Arnaut told him how it had happened. And the king had great joy at this, and thought it most excellent fun. And the pledges were returned, and to each he gave fine presents.'

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOCIAL POSITION OF PROVENÇAL POETS.

SUFFICIENT has been said in the preceding pages to show the superiority of lyrical over epic poetry in Provence. This inequality of the two branches implied a commensurate difference of praise and social esteem awarded to those who excelled in either of them, and it is perhaps from this point of view that the two great divisions of poets in the *langue d'oc*, respectively described as 'joglars' and 'trobadors,' or, in the French and generally adopted form of the word, 'troubadours,' may be most distinctly recognised. The two professions were frequently united in the same person, and the duties belonging to either are in many respects identical, or at least similar to such a degree as to make strict separation almost impossible; but it seems sufficiently established that the verb 'trobar' and its derivative noun first and foremost apply to lyrical poetry. To speak therefore of the Troubadour as the singer of songs, of cansos and sirventeses and albas and retroensas, is a correct and tolerably comprehensive definition, borne out moreover by the historic fact that, with the sole exception of Arnaut Daniel (who,

as was mentioned before, is in his biography called a joglar), none of the celebrated troubadours is known to have written narrative poems. These latter, on the other hand, are either, like 'Flamenca' and 'Jaufre,' by anonymous authors, or else by such men as Arnaud de Carcasses or Matfre Ermengau, who have acquired little or no fame as lyrical poets, and moreover belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the song-tide of the earlier epoch was ebbing fast.

To the Troubadour, the undisputed leader of the poetic profession, we must turn first. It has been at all times, and is still, an all but impossible task to define the social position of a literary man, *quâ* literary man. So much depends upon his success in his profession, his family, his personal bearing, that a general rule can never comprise all individual cases. The same applies to the Provençal poets of the middle ages. It would be absurd to say that differences of rank did not exist in that primitive republic of letters. The composite nature of a profession, the humbler associates of which were often fain to amuse popular audiences at wakes and fairs with rude songs or tricks of jugglery, entirely precludes the social equality of all its members. But in the art of poetry a common ground was at least established, where men of all classes met on equal terms, and where the chance of success was little if at all furthered by accidental advantages of birth. The maxim of *carriere ouverte au talent* was fully carried out, and we find that the most

celebrated troubadours were frequently men of low origin, who by mere dint of genius conquered fame and gain. Folquet for instance, the gay troubadour, subsequently Bishop of Toulouse, and zealous persecutor of the Albigeois heretics, was the son of a simple merchant, and the great Bernart of Ventadorn seems to have been of still humbler descent—at least, if we may believe the testimony of an amiable brother poet, who delights in informing the public that Bernart's father was a common serving-man, good at shooting with the bow, and that his mother gathered brushwood to light the fire. Marcabrun, another celebrated and at the same time most eccentric troubadour, was, according to one account, a foundling left at the gate of a rich man, while another biography calls him the (apparently illegitimate) son of a poor woman of the name of Bruna, the latter statement being confirmed by the troubadour's own boast:

Marcabrus lo filhs Na Bruna
Fo ergendratz en tal luna
Qe anc non amet neguna
Ni d'autra non fo amatz.

In English: 'Marcabrun, the son of Madame Bruna, was begotten under such a moon that he never loved a woman, and never was loved by one.'

It has been computed that to the middle and lower classes twenty-two troubadours owe their origin, to which number probably many of those must be added of whose circumstances no record has been left. The clergy furnished no less than thirteen poets, some of

whom confined themselves to religious and didactic subjects, and therefore, strictly speaking, ought not to be called troubadours. Others, however, had no such conscientious scruples, and one of the most daring and outspoken satirists in Provençal literature was a monk. Uc de St. Cyr, destined by his father for the clerical profession, escaped from the university of Montpellier and became a troubadour, while in other cases gay poets turned monks and closed a wild career with repentance and holy exercise. Of Gui d'Uisel, a canon of Brioude and Montferrand, it is told that he dutifully abandoned the muse by command of the Papal legate.

By far the largest proportion of the troubadours known to us—fifty-seven in number—belong to the nobility, not to the highest nobility in most cases, it is true. In several instances poverty is distinctly mentioned as the cause for adopting the profession of a troubadour. It almost appears, indeed, as if this profession, like that of the churchman and sometimes in connection with it (see the Monk of Montaudon), had been regarded by Provençal families as a convenient means of providing for their younger sons. Bertran de Born, on the other hand, owed the successful enforcement of his claims to the heritage he held in common with his unfortunate brother Constantine as much to his song as to his sword.

It remains to refer to no less than twenty-three reigning princes of more or less importance of whose poetic efforts we have cognisance. With a few exceptions the contributions to literature of

these distinguished amateurs are but slight. But that does not diminish the significance of the fact of these powerful men entering into competition with the sons of tailors and pedlars.

Richard I. of England occupies the foremost place amongst these princely singers. The beautiful canzo composed in his Austrian prison, and preserved in both the *langue d'oc* and *langue d'oïl*, is deservedly popular. It is perhaps less generally known that Richard occasionally made his poetry the vehicle of political invective. There is extant by him a song in which he violently attacks the Dauphin, Robert of Auvergne, accusing him of venality and breach of faith. The Dauphin, nothing loth, meets violence with violence, using in his retort the same complicated metre in which the Prince had attacked him. The same Dauphin appears again in another poetical encounter of a rather less elevated kind. This time his antagonist is a homely citizen of the name of Peire Pelissier, who, combining the useful with the agreeable, had metrically reminded the Dauphin of a certain sum of money owing to him. The indignation with which the noble poet rejects the low demand is beautiful to see. But the very fact of his entering into such a contest with such an antagonist shows the equalising, not to say levelling, influence which the universal desire for poetic fame exercised on the minds of men in those days.

By far the most important poet of this class, and one of the most remarkable, as he was chrono-

logically the first, of all troubadours, is William IX., sovereign Count of Poitiers, a noble prince, well known in history. The time of his reign, about the end of the eleventh century, marks the commencement of Provençal poetry, and this sudden appearance of an accomplished poet, mastering the most intricate rules of rhyme and metre ever invented, is unique in the history of literature. It is indeed in this case also explainable only from the disappearance of previous stages of poetic development.

William of Poitiers is an interesting character in many respects. He is the prototype of the Troubadour, the wayfaring singer, wandering through the beautiful land of Provence in search of praise and amorous adventure, the latter not always as strictly moral nor yet as sentimental as might be desired. Even in those gallant days his dangerous gift of captivating women's affections seems to have attracted more than ordinary notice. 'The Count of Poitiers,' says the Provençal biography, 'was one of the most courteous men in the world and a great deceiver of ladies; and he was a brave knight and had much to do with love-affairs; and he knew well how to sing and make verses; and for a long time he roamed all through the land to deceive the ladies.' The poems of the Count further illustrate these statements in a manner not always delicate, but always witty and amusing. It ought to be added that, before his end, William repented of his evil ways, in witness of which the last of his remain-

ing songs gives utterance to regretful sorrow and anxiety.

But the chief importance of William's life and poetry for our present purpose lies in the light which these throw on the high esteem in which the poet's art was held in those days. For it must be remembered that the man who proudly donned the Troubadour's garb was the same Duke of Aquitain and Count of Poitiers whom William of Malmesbury mentions amongst the great warriors of his time, and who, in the unfortunate crusade of 1101, appeared at the head of three hundred thousand fighting men.

Such were the princely amateurs in mediæval Provence. Turning from these to the Troubadours proper, that is to professional poets who owed their sustenance to their song, we find that they occupied an important and honoured position in fashionable circles. There is scarcely a noble family in the south of France whose name is not by one or more of its members connected with the history of the Troubadours. His love of poetry and poets is a redeeming feature in the lion-hearted Richard's wild career, but he had inherited this feeling from his mother, the much-maligned Queen Eleanor, whom we shall meet again as the generous friend of a celebrated singer. The kingly house of Aragon vied with that of Anjou in its liberal protection of the gay science. The names of Alfonso II., Peter II., and Peter III. continually occur in the grateful acknowledgments of the Troubadours; and to another monarch of Spanish origin, King Alfonso X.

of Castile, belongs the honour of having given shelter to the remnant of Provençal poets after the fall of their own country. At his court lived and deplored the decline of poetry the last of the Troubadours, the noble Guiraut Riquier. Many other protectors of the Troubadours, no less liberal though less illustrious, will be incidentally mentioned in these pages.

At the courts of these princes and nobles the Troubadour was eagerly welcomed. Without any distinct charge or office he partook of the liberality of his protector, half guest, half courtier, but without any of the irksome duties of the latter, and free to come and go where his wayward mood attracted him. We hear of frequent and rapid changes of abode in the lives of many troubadours, mostly in consequence of some imbroglio with a lady. But Provençal poets were naturally a restless tribe, ever in search of new lands and new loves.

The gifts with which the Troubadour's song was rewarded varied in nature and value according to the wealth and liberality of the donor. Horses gaily caparisoned, rich vestments, and money are not unfrequently mentioned. The Monk of Montaudon rails at a brother poet for having accepted *manh vielh vestimen* (many an old coat) previously worn to rags, we may suppose, by its economical owner. But other nobles showed a more generous appreciation of poetry, and in one case at least we hear of a liberal host who, enraptured by his poet-guest's song, presents him with his own palfrey and dress. This

instance at the same time illustrates the spontaneous nature of most of these gifts. The troubadour was not like an English poet laureate or the bard of a Welsh prince, receiving a yearly salary in money or kind, and bound for certain emoluments to accomplish a certain amount of verse. An engagement of this kind was as unsuitable to his disposition as it would have been inconsistent with the terms of equality on which he lived with his protector. The perfect ease of intercourse existing between poets and princes of the highest rank is indeed astonishing. Bertran de Born, a petty baron, called the sons of Henry II. of England by familiar nicknames, and Raimon de Miraval, a poor knight of Carcassonne, used the same liberty with the mighty Count Raimon VI. of Toulouse, with whom he was united by the bonds of tenderest mutual friendship. Even the powerful Raimon de Rossilho, proud by nature and further excited by jealous suspicion, has to treat a servant of his own household with the utmost consideration, merely because this retainer happens to be Guillem de Cabestanh, the author of some popular love-songs. Only when the poet's guilt is established beyond a doubt does Raimon give way to his revengeful passion.

Another privilege enjoyed by the troubadour, and prized by him much higher than all those previously mentioned, was the favour of noble ladies, granted to him as the guerdon of his impassioned song. The relation between lady and troubadour has been a favourite subject with writers of history and

romance from the early middle ages to the present time, and it is to be feared that the popularity of Provençal poets rests quite as much on their love-affairs as on their literary achievements. From the story of Flamenca previously told and numerous other incidents to be mentioned in the following pages, the reader may form an idea of the laxity of morals in those days, especially as regards the marriage-vow. Considering this moral atmosphere and the free intercourse of the sexes existing in Provençal society, where the *dueña* or any similar institution seems to have been unknown, the frequent occurrence of a guilty passion between a troubadour and a high-born lady—for instance, the wife of his protector—is intrinsically but too probable. But it is nevertheless an undoubted fact, although the old biographers are by no means prone to acknowledge it, that the homage offered by the troubadour and accepted by the lady did not necessarily imply guilty weakness on the part of the latter. This is sufficiently proved by the attitude of a third and strongly interested party, the husband. In many instances he thought himself honoured by the eloquent praise lavished on his wife, and was willing to make allowance for occasional outbursts of passion mixed with the more conventional terms of distant adoration. Count Barral de Vaux, the good-natured husband of Azalais, the lady whom Peire Vidal celebrated under the pseudonym of Vierna, went so far as to adjust little differences arising between his wife and

that eccentric poet. Count Richard of Poitou also encouraged his sister Mathilda to accept the homage of Bertran de Born, which seems to establish the acknowledged possibility of a perfectly innocent relation of the kind alluded to beyond a doubt. The future King of England would hardly have exposed a lady of his house to ignominious suspicion for the sake of a vassal, much as he stood in dread of the dangerous gifts of that vassal.

And this last remark indicates at the same time the clue to the whole extraordinary phenomenon of the privileged social position of the Troubadours. These poets were the stern censors of moral and political depravity as well as the singers of love. They possessed the public ear, and, conscious of their power, they wielded it, often no doubt to noble purpose, but no less frequently with a strong admixture of that personal bias which so few pamphleteers and party writers know how to eschew. The bitterness and rancour of the Provençal *sirventes* are equalled by few satirists of other nations, surpassed by none; and many a noble—and many a lady too, for that matter—who might be comparatively indifferent to the Troubadour's praise were fain to evade his blame by ministering to his comfort or his vanity.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JOGLAR.

THE name 'Troubadour,' we have seen, is synonymous with our 'lyrical poet.' His office was, strictly speaking, limited to the writing, or at least producing, of songs. But for the publication of these poems two more cooperators were required—the musical composer and the singer or reciter. Frequently the Troubadour invented his own melodies, and takes pride in stating that fact; some even combined with these two faculties that of the executive musician; 'Pons de Capduelh,' we are told, 'was a poet (*trobava*), and could play the violin and sing.' Others, however, were not so variously endowed, and in that case they engaged the services of an assistant, technically called joglar. The joglar proper seems to be an exclusively Provençal institution. The necessities of musical composition and promulgation of course existed more or less in all poetic communities. Boccaccio says of Dante that he loved to associate with musicians who supplied his canzone and sestine with melodies, but we nowhere read that he kept a professional composer for that purpose.

The exact border-line between troubadour and

joglar cannot be drawn without difficulty. Sometimes, as we have seen, the two offices were combined in one person, at others the same individual rose from the lower to the higher class. Of Marcabrun, for instance, subsequently one of the most celebrated troubadours, we are told that he began his career as apprentice or joglar to another poet named Cercamon.[1] The safest distinction is arrived at by bearing in mind that the joglars were principally, though by no means exclusively, musicians and executants, the converse ratio of the creative and executive faculties obtaining amongst the superior class of poets. For that position the Troubadours claimed for themselves, and took good care to let the world know of their claim. Towards the joglars, immediately dependent on their productions, they frequently adopt the tone of haughty condescension. 'Bayona,' Raimon de Miraval addresses an unfortunate singer, 'I know well it is for a *sirventes* that you have come amongst us. And counting this there will be three; for two I have made already by which you have gained much gold and silver, Bayona, and many a worn coat, and other clothes

[1] This kind of personal apprenticeship to a renowned troubadour, be it here parenthetically stated, was, in the good times, the common way of acquiring the complicated and difficult art of poetry. Other poets taught themselves with the assistance of the great models preserved in writing, or transmitted by word of mouth and sound of voice or fiddle. Jaufre Rudel says prettily, that meadows and orchards, trees and flowers, and the cries and songs of wild birds have been his teachers. The 'Academies,' *i.e.* teaching and examining bodies, were, like the schools of the German master singers, creations of a late epoch.

good and bad.' 'Goodness! Bayona,' he says in another poem, 'how poverty-stricken do I see you! badly dressed in a mean gown! But I will draw you from your poverty with a sirventes which I offer you.' In other places the troubadours express anxious doubts as to the memory and capacity of their interpreters, and seriously exhort the latter to adhere strictly to the original as transmitted to them by personal instruction. 'My son,' Perdigo addresses his joglar, 'on your honour, I charge you to take good care that you understand the work and do not deface it.' Other poets sought safety from truncation in the well-knitted and compact woof of their stanzas, which would not allow of the omission of a single verse or rhyme without manifest detriment to the whole organism. 'Marcabrun,' that celebrated troubadour boasts of himself, 'knows how to turn and interlace sense and verse in such a way that no other man can take away a single word;' which precaution, by the way, answered against plagiarists as well as against slovenly reciters.

But the same feeling of ill-disguised contempt which some troubadours betray for their immediate subordinates, others extend to the whole class of singers and performers, and especially the works of later poets are full of bitter invective against the meanness, vulgarity, and innumerable other vices and shortcomings of the joglars. The nobles are reproved for receiving them at their castles, and the decline of poetic art is not unjustly attributed to the

growing taste for the buffooneries cultivated by the lower grades of the body poetic.

All things considered, this antagonism was not wholly unjustified. It has already been said that the humbler members of the profession were fain to turn an honest penny by enlivening the feasts and fairs of villagers by ingenious tricks of jugglery, and whoever will consult the 'Instructions to Joglars,' above mentioned, will find a considerable portion of the modern *répertoire* anticipated. Even dancing on the tight rope, and training and producing clever dogs and monkeys, were accomplishments not wholly beneath the dignity of the joglar. No wonder that noble troubadours shunned all contact with a profession comprehending such doubtful elements. But of course there were joglars and joglars, just as in our times there are artists and artists; and a man like Perdigo, who himself wrote beautiful songs, and kept a singer to sing them, and who was knighted by the Marquis of Montferrat on account of his poetic merits, would no more have considered a common trickster his equal than Mario or Faure would artistically fraternise with the 'Great Vance.'

And yet the old biographer calls Perdigo repeatedly and persistently a joglar. It is in such cases as this that the distinction between the two classes alluded to practically ceases. Joglars were received in the best society on the same terms of equality as were granted to the more exclusive brethren; the same gifts of horses and rich gar-

ments rewarded their efforts, and these efforts also were to a large extent identical with those of the troubadours, excepting perhaps the one circumstance that the joglars, although poets themselves, included the pieces of other authors in their *répertoire*, while the troubadours, if gifted with executive talents, always confined themselves to their own productions.

But another line of distinction may be drawn from the purely literary point of view previously indicated. The Troubadours, it has been said, were lyrical poets, and seem to have looked upon romancers, novelists, *et hoc genus omne* with all the superciliousness of a higher caste. Of one poet it is distinctly stated that he was *no bos trobaire mas noellaire*, 'not a good troubadour, but a story-teller.' The Joglars, on the contrary, as we know from the 'Ensenhamens,' were bound to know and reproduce the whole store of facts and fables more or less common to the mediæval literatures of Western Europe. The slight and temporary character of most of these reproductions, and the comparative neglect with which they were treated by Provençal literati, have previously been touched upon, the scarcity of epical manuscripts in the *langue d'oc* being the natural corollary of these two causes. For the number of joglars capable of wielding the pen must have been very small, and the scribes and scholars to whom we owe the admirable and large collections of lyrical pieces were naturally much less anxious to preserve the humble productions of the narrative muse.

Hence the astounding fact above referred to that even of the epics of so renowned a poet as Arnaut Daniel not a single specimen remains, and the other circumstance, no less surprising, that the Provençal biographer passes over these important and evidently most popular works with complete silence, saving his literary conscience by a cursory reference to Arnaut as a 'Joglar.' It is a further significant fact that most of the narrative poems preserved—barring the scanty remains of the popular epic which belong to a separate epoch and circle of literary production—date from a comparatively late period when the all-engrossing sway of lyrical poetry, and with it the vitality of Provençal literature itself, began to dwindle. The social aspects of this decline and fall, its causes, and the vain efforts to check its detrimental force, are brought home to us in the stanzas of a noble-minded poet, Guiraut Riquier, justly called the Last of the Troubadours. For at his death, about the end of the thirteenth century, the final expiration of the literature and of the independent and artistically available idiom of Provence may be said to commence.

Of the life of Guiraut Riquier comparatively little is known, his biography being, strange to say, not included in any of the Provençal collections. On the other hand we are more than usually well instructed as to the chronology of his works. For to almost every one of his poems the date of its production is affixed in the MS., which moreover expressly claims to be an exact copy of the poet's

original. From the latter statement we may at the same time infer the penmanship of Guiraut, which in those days was never unaccompanied by other literary attainments. But, besides this, the scholarly cast of his mind is sufficiently proved by the troubadour's work. The wonder is how with this tendency could coexist in him the sweetest and freshest fragrance of poetic *naïveté*—a *naïveté* and spontaneity all the more admirable as they are altogether rare amongst the Troubadours. To him Provençal literature owes perhaps its nearest approach to the unalloyed impulse of popular song. To this side of his creativeness we shall have to return on a later occasion.

Guiraut's lines had not fallen in pleasant places. The old times of glory and well-being for the Troubadours were past and gone, and although Guiraut found a protector and friend in Alfonso X., King of Castile, to whom, as he says in 1278, his poetic services had been devoted for sixteen years, this protection seems not to have been of a kind to exempt the troubadour wholly from the cares of existence. With a bitterness recalling Dante's complaint of the steepness of strange stairs and the salt flavour of strange bread, Guiraut speaks of the *vergonha e paor*, the shame and fear with which he enters the presence of a noble lord *per demandar lo sieu*, to ask him for his property.

To the above-named King Alfonso was presented a curious memorial or supplication, in which Guiraut Riquier deplores the degradation of his noble calling

and at the same time suggests various remedies for the growing evil. This was not the only or the last time that the troubadour stood up in the defence of his art. In a powerful sirventes dated 1278, he refutes the attacks of fanatic priests on poetry—that is, poetry in the true and elevated meaning of the word. 'So little,' he complains, 'is the noble science of poetry valued nowadays, that people scarcely desire or suffer it, or will listen to it. . . . And our preachers declare it to be a sin, and reprove every one bitterly for its sake.' He fully admits the justice of these reproaches in many cases in which poets invent 'vain things whence sin may arise or war and disunion. 'But,' he concludes, 'those who with mastership string together noble words, and with wisdom and knowledge teach the truth, can never find sufficient honour and reward.'

The reader who might be inclined to see a tinge of scholastic pedantry in this passionate plea for 'wisdom and knowledge,' ought to consider the root of the evil combated by Guiraut. The long war with France and the crusaders had left its detrimental mark on the manners and morals of Provençal nobles. Their fortunes were wasted, their castles destroyed, and the new generation brought up in the camp knew little of the taste and refinement of previous ages. Hence the bitter attacks in the poems of the later troubadours directed against the vices of the nobles, their avarice, their stinginess, their coarseness of taste which delighted alone in the vulgar jests of the lowest joglars. It is

especially against the encroachments of the latter on the domain of artistic poetry that Guiraut's angry protest is directed. The mixing up of the two classes of Joglars and Troubadours he believes to be the first cause of the disease, and as the intellect of the time had grown too obtuse to draw the line, he demands an external sign of distinction. Hence the somewhat strange proposal laid down in his celebrated missive to the King of Castile.

The 'Suplicatio qe fes Guiraut Riquier al rey de Castela per lo nom del joglars l'an LXXIII.' is a most curious document. Nothing would be easier than to draw into ridicule a man who intended to prop a tottering literature with a name, a title. But at the same time this man is so much in earnest himself, and his cause so noble, that one's smile at his Quixotic notion involuntarily gives way to a feeling of deep sympathy. Guiraut begins his poem with a short exordium of complacent self-laudation, in which he dwells at some length on his competence to treat the subject:

> Pus dieus m'a dat saber
> Et entendemen ver
> De trobar, etc.

Next follow the usual compliments to his protector, and, this duty discharged, Guiraut begins to speak from the fulness of his heart. 'You know,' he says, 'that all men live in classes differing and distinguished from each other. Therefore it seems to me that such a distinction of name ought also to be made amongst the Joglars; for it is unjust that the

best of them should not be distinguished by name as well as they are by deed. It is unfair that an ignorant man of small learning, who knows a little how to play some instrument and strums it in public places for whatever people will give him, or one who sings low ditties to low people about the streets and taverns, and takes alms without shame from the first comer—that all these should indiscriminately go by the name of Joglars. . . . For joglaria was invented by wise men, to give joy to good people by their skill in playing on instruments. . . . After that came the Troubadours to record valiant deeds, and to praise the good and encourage them in their noble endeavour. . . . But in our days and for some time past a set of people without sense and wisdom have undertaken to sing and compose stanzas, and play on instruments . . . and their jealousy is roused when they see honour done to the good and noble.' Every one, he reasons, ought to be named according to the work he does, and it would be quite just, he characteristically adds, to apply the name of Joglars to all poets and singers indiscriminately if they were all more or less of the same kind and worth, like common citizens. This, however, is not the case, and the good suffer by being mixed up with the low and vulgar.

To check this confusion by a tangible sign, to distinguish by an acknowledged name and title the trickster and player of instruments, who flatters the senses by momentary enjoyment, from the learned and serious poet whose works are graven on the

memory and long survive their author, to do this and save poetry from impending ruin, Guiraut says, is a worthy task for the wise and noble King Alfonso.

The king's answer to this request is extant. It is written in verse, but otherwise composed with all the gravity of a state paper, and at the same time with a lucidity of argument rarely found in mediæval writings. 'Although,' the king justly remarks, 'it is unwise and of dangerous consequence to speak about the affairs of strangers, yet he who holds honour dear, and possesses sense and wisdom and power withal, ought to consider the interests of others together with his own.' After this cautious beginning, the king fully admits the reason of Guiraut's complaint, and points out the injustice of comprising all the members of the poetic, musical, and histrionic professions under the common title of Joglar, a word which the king learnedly adds is derived from the Latin *joculator*, and therefore is wholly unfit to designate the higher branches of the art of poetry.

In Spain, we are further told, these things are managed better; musicians and mountebanks and poets have each a name of their own, and nobody can mistake the one for the other. A similar distinction the king now proposes for the domain of the *langue d'oc*, and for that purpose divides the whole poetic community into three classes. First and lowest are named the people who would not dare to show themselves at court, and who hang about taverns and village-greens, showing off the

tricks of learned dogs and goats, imitating birds' voices, or singing coarse songs. These in future are to be called by the Italian word '*bufos*,' 'as is the custom in Lombardy.'

Different from these are the musicians and reciters of stories who contribute to the amusement of the nobles by these arts or other agreeable pastimes. These, and these alone, ought to claim the name of '*joglars*,' and they ought to be received at court and liberally remunerated according to their merits.

The third and highest class comprises those who possess the gift of composing verses and melodies, and for that reason are entitled to the name of *inventores*, which, as the king remarks, is the Latin equivalent of the vernacular *trobadors*.

But a last and highest distinction is reserved for those amongst the poets who combine the useful with the agreeable, and in the sweet rhymes of their canzos enforce moral and religious maxims. These are in future to be called *doctors de trobar*, doctors of poetry; for, adds the king, who is fond of etymology and not wholly averse to a pun:

. . . Car doctrinar
Sabon ben qui'ls enten.

Whether the degree was ever conferred remains uncertain. It is obvious that the creating of twenty doctors of poetry would not make one poet. At the same time if a man or men of high poetic gifts had arisen, the improved social position intended for them would have been a gain and an

encouragement. But it is a melancholy fact that what seems most spontaneous and involuntary in man—genius—obeys, after all, the universal rules of supply and demand, and that when once literary vitality and literary interest are departed from a nation it is hopeless to galvanise the corpse with artificial life. Guiraut's scheme in itself is therefore hardly worth mentioning. But it is interesting as a symptom of the same tendency of the age towards mixing up poetry with scholarship which soon afterwards led to the institution of Academies, and Jeux Floraux, and Poet-Laureateships, and traces of which have survived till the present day in Provence and elsewhere.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TRACES OF POPULAR SONG IN THE POETRY OF THE TROUBADOURS.—THE PASTORELA.

THE Troubadours, it has been said more than once, were court poets, their songs a court literature, taking its theme from, and reciprocally appealing to, the upper classes of society. There was an advantage and a still greater drawback connected with this exclusiveness of culture and sympathies. In the early middle ages it was of the utmost importance to raise, and abide by, a standard of refinement in opposition to the prevailing coarseness of the age. But, on the other hand, the fresh and ever-bubbling source of spontaneous feeling was absent, which their *rapport* with the people supplied to the French Trouvère, the German Minnesinger, and our own Elizabethan dramatists, court poets though all these were. Hence the monotony and laboured dryness of many of the troubadours' songs, and the narrow range of thought covered by their works compared with the mediæval literature of other countries. There were, however, exceptions to the rule, and although not a particle of the presumably rich fund of Provençal folklore has been thought worth pre-

serving,[1] still there is distinct evidence that its charms were appreciated by several of the knightly singers, in spite of prejudice and courtly superciliousness. The results of this appreciation are certain characteristic forms of song evidently derived from popular sources, although treated with artistic finish by the Troubadours. The tone of these poems differs so essentially from the ordinary bias of Provençal literature, that it seemed well to treat of them in separate chapters.

No better sign of the sterling value of Guiraut Riquier's talent could be required than the fact that the first name we meet with in this new field is his. The same troubadour who boldly protested against the increasing coarseness amongst the nobles was able to perceive in the natural artlessness of the people's song a new element of refined poetry. It was perhaps from the infusion of this new life-blood that he expected the revival of his art quite as much as from the artificial safeguards of the poets' social position which the King of Castile could grant. Guiraut Riquier is the Provençal representative of the 'Pastorela,' or 'Pastoreta,' the shepherd's song. The popular origin of this form of

[1] M. Damase Arbaud some time ago published a charming collection of popular ditties ('Chants Populaires de Provence,' Aix, 1862), containing amongst other pieces some beautiful Christmas songs or *noëls* evidently of great antiquity, although still sung in Provence. Some of these poems, the editor believes, date back from the times of the Troubadours. But the oral tradition to which they owe their preservation has unfortunately changed their linguistic character beyond recognition.

poetry cannot well be denied. There is about the life of the shepherd amongst hills and lonely places, the tending of his flocks, and the very knitting of his stockings, a touch of simple pensive poetry which has escaped few nations, and it may be asserted that in the primitive songs of every people on earth the pastoral idea is represented in one form or another. It is equally true that artistic and artificial poetry has taken up and remodelled the original subject in a somewhat arbitrary manner. From Theocritus and Virgil and Guarini and Tasso down to our modern operatic stage the shepherd with his pipe, the shepherdess with her crook and surrounded by snow-white lambkins, have been introduced in the most becoming poses. But the innate raciness of the theme could never be wholly obliterated. Adam de la Halle's 'Robin et Marion,' written in the fourteenth century, and justly claiming to be the first comic opera in France, is full of the life and the rollicking fun of the people; and the original features of broad Scotch humour and common sense may be discovered under the thin layer of rococo tinsel in Allan Ramsay's 'Faithful Shepherd.' Guiraut Riquier belongs to the more realistic class of pastoral poets. He occupies an intermediate position between Adam's broad out-spokenness and Tasso's euphuism. His shepherdess—for a shepherdess and only one is the heroine of his six pastorelas—is evidently a real being taken from real life; at the same time the coarsenesses of this reality are sufficiently toned down to suit the fastidious taste of

a courtly audience. Another uncommon feature, especially in a Troubadour's creation, is the strenuous virtue with which the rustic beauty resists the most tempting offers of her knightly lover. She is meek and courteous and affable, but she knows exactly where to draw the line between innocent flirtation and serious passion. Whether such a character in such a sphere of life partakes more of idealism or of realism the ingenuous reader must decide. But it is most improbable that a Troubadour should have doubted, or allowed others to doubt, his absolute irresistibility unless convinced of the contrary by the most undeniable proof. We may therefore assume that Guiraut Riquier's adventure with a shepherdess, if not absolutely copied from life, is at least partly drawn from autobiographical sources.

The first of Guiraut's six remaining pastorelas is dated 1260, and describes the poet's meeting with the shepherdess. 'The other day,' he says, 'I was walking by the side of a brook, musing and alone, for love led me to think of song, when suddenly I saw a sweet shepherdess, lovely and kind, watching her flock. I stopped before her, seeing her so comely, and she received me well.

'My question was: "Sweetheart, are you loved by some one, and do you know what love is?" "Certainly, sir," she answered without guile, "and I have plighted my troth, there is no doubt on the subject." "Maiden, I am glad to have found you, if it may be that I should please you." "Sir, you have

thought of me too much; if I were foolish I might fancy a great deal." "Maiden, do you not believe me?" "Sir, I must not."

'"Sweet girl, if you accept my love I am longing for yours." "Sir, it is impossible; you have a sweetheart, and I a lover." "Maiden, however that may be, it is you I love, and your love I would enjoy." "Sir, look somewhere else for one who is more worthy of you." "Better than you I do not wish for." "Sir, you are foolish."

'"I am no fool, sweet mistress. Love gives me leave, and I yield to your loveliness." "Sir, I would I were rid of your wooing speech." "Maiden, as I live, you are too coy. My prayer is humbly made." "Sir, I must not forget myself so much; alas! my honour would be lost if I trusted too lightly." "Maiden, my love compels me." "Sir, it would little beseem you."

'"Maiden, whatever I may say have no fear that I would dishonour you." "Sir, I am your friend, for I see your wisdom checks your passion." "Maiden, when I am in fear of doing wrong I think of 'Beautiful Semblance!'"[1] "Sir, I much like your kind behaviour; for you know how to please." "Maiden, what do I hear?" "Sir, that I love you."

'"Tell me, sweet maiden, what has made you speak such pleasant words?" "Sir, wherever I go I hear the sweet songs of Sir Guiraut Riquier." "Maiden, let us not cease to speak of what I ask you." "Sir, does not 'Beautiful Semblance' favour

[1] The *senhal* or pseudonym of his lady-love.

you, she who guards you from loose flatteries?" "Maiden, she will not hear me." "Sir, she is right."

I have given the first pastoral *in extenso*, to convey an idea to the reader of the charming tone pervading the whole number. The idea is simple enough: an amorous knight, whose importunate offers to an unprotected girl are kept in check by mere dint of graceful, witty, sometimes tart reply. This motive is essentially the same in the five remaining pieces of the series. Several variations are, however, introduced with the aggregate result of a kind of plot or story. Two years are supposed to have elapsed between the first poem and the second. Again the pair meet; and again there are passionate importunities on the one, and graceful evasions on the other side. Remarkable is especially the sly humour with which the girl receives the knight's excuses for his long absence. The first stanza, with a translation subjoined, may serve as specimen:—

L'autrier trobei la bergeira d'antan,
Saludei la, e respos mi la bella;
Pueis dis: 'Senhor com avetz estat tan
Q'ieu nous ai vist? ges m'amors nous gragella?'
'Toza si fa mai qe no fas semblan.'
'Senhor, l'afan per qe podetz soffrir?'
'Toza, tals es q'aissi m'a fag venir.'
'Senhor et ieu anava vos cercan.'
'Toza, aissi etz vostres anhels gardan.'
'Senhor, e vos en passan so m'albir.'

My shepherdess I found of yester year,
And to my greeting she made meek reply:

'Sir, do you hold,' she said, 'my love so dear,
That year and day have passed since you were nigh?'
'I love you, maiden, more than may appear.'
'How could you bear the burden of your pain?'
'It is my love that brought me here again.'
'Sir, many a time I sought you far and near.'
'Your flock alone, O maiden, you hold dear.'
'Through many lands to wander *you* are fain.'

Nothing new occurs in the third pastoral. But in the fourth, dated three years after the third and seven years after the first poem, matters are considerably altered. The shepherdess has been united to her swain, and the knight finds her rocking a sleeping child in her lap. Time has worked its changes on the knight also, and at first she does not or pretends not to recognise him. To one of his amorous protestations she replies: 'That is just what Guiraut has told me, and yet I have not been deceived by him.' 'Girl,' he answers, 'Guiraut has never forgotten you, but you refuse to remember me.' 'Sir,' the girl says, evidently in her old vein of mocking compliance, 'his graceful bearing pleased me much better than you do, and if he came again I could not resist him.' In the further course of the conversation Guiraut lays great stress on the fame the girl owes to his songs all over Provence. He also, by a very blunt question, elicits the fact that the father of the child is one 'who has taken me to church,' a circumstance which by no means abates the passionate ardour of the troubadour. But he finds the matron as inexorable as he had found the maiden, and at last has to depart on his way with the reluc-

tant compliment: 'I have tried you sorely, but have found you of unexceptionable conduct.'

Another space of seven years is supposed to elapse before we hear anything more of the shepherdess. These long intervals give a strange touch of realism to the story; for one does not see why the poet should wilfully destroy the illusions of youth and beauty without some reason founded on fact and chronology. This time the shepherdess and her daughter are on their return from a pilgrimage to Compostella. They are resting by the roadside, when the knight riding past sees them, and asks for news from Spain. At first the conversation takes a political turn, quite in accordance with the mature age of the parties, one would think. But the troubadour is incorrigible. He soon relapses into love-making, and goes so far as to threaten the lady with satirical songs in case of non-compliance. Even an appropriate allusion to his grey hair cannot bring him to reason. He listens with an ill grace, and at last takes angry leave.

The sixth and last scene of the drama is laid at an inn, where the knight has sought shelter from the rain. He notices that the buxom landlady and her daughter are whispering together, and after some time recognises in the former the shepherdess of auld lang syne; very lang syne, for again six years intervene between this and the last meeting. Guiraut at once broaches his favourite topic. Hearing that the lady is a widow, he gallantly suggests: 'Surely a woman like you ought not to be without a

lover!' She frankly confesses that there is an aspirant to her hand, but she does not feel inclined to change her condition a second time, for the very sensible reason, amongst others, that her wooer has 'seven children all under ten.' 'My only comfort,' she adds, pointing to her daughter, 'the source of my joy, stands before you.' This touching appeal draws the attention of the knight towards the girl, and immediately her youthful charms produce the usual effect on his inflammable heart. The sudden transfer of allegiance he excuses by the treatment he has received, and implores the daughter to make amends for the mother's cruelty. But again he receives nothing but pretty speeches, and thus the adventure comes to a close.

Another poet much connected with the pastoreta is Gui d'Uisel, a celebrated troubadour of Limousin, who belonged to the church, and ultimately is said to have abandoned his poetic pursuits by an express command of the Papal legate. In connection with two brothers and a cousin he seems to have formed a sort of co-operative society on the principle of divided artistic labour and accomplishment. 'They were all four poets,' the old biography says, 'and made excellent songs. Elias (the cousin) wrote the good tensos ;[1] Eble the wicked ones ; and Peter sang what the other three had invented.' Gui, as was said before, was famous for his pastoral songs, several of which are extant. They show

[1] Songs of dispute or contention.

little of Guiraut Riquier's healthy realism, but are, on the other hand, full of quiet lyrical charm. In one of them he prettily describes the reconciliation between a shepherd and his lass, brought about by the troubadour's own counsel. The opening stanza is perhaps unsurpassed in Provençal literature for gentle, melodious flow of verse :—

L'autre jorn cost una via
Auzi cantar un pastor
Una canson qe dizia,
'Mort m'an semblan traidor.'
E qant el vi qe venia
Salh en pes per far m'onor,
E ditz, 'Deus sal, mo senhor,
Q'er ai trobat ses bauzia
Leial amic celador,
A cui m'aus clamar d'amor.'[1]

Marcabrun also, the satirical poet. of whom more will have to be said hereafter, is amongst pastoral poets. He has little of Gui d'Uisel's lyrical sweetness, and his discourse with a shepherdess—for his poem also takes the form of a dialogue—is not always over-refined. But here again, strange to say, the flatteries of the troubadour find no favour with the maiden—a circumstance the recurrence of which greatly tends to increase one's belief in the virtue of Provençal shepherdesses.

[1] 'The other day by the roadside I heard a shepherd sing a song, which said : "False traitors have killed me." And when he saw me approach, he jumped to his feet to do me honour and said, 'God be with you, sir; for now I have found a friend, leal and discreet and without falsehood. to whom I may complain of love.'

## CHAPTER IX.

### OTHER POPULAR FORMS.—THE ALBA AND SERENA.

SONGS of the morning and evening—*alba* and *serena*—are amongst the most characteristic embodiments of Provençal poetry. To us these words come through the medium of northern French, and their original meaning has been lost on the way. *Aubade* and *serenade* mean amongst modern nations, from the shores of the Baltic to the shores of the Mediterranean, the musical entertainments performed or arranged by the lover under his lady-love's window at morning or eventide. In music these words have received a still different technical meaning, founded, however, on the same peculiar significance of the term. For in their *serenades* and *aubades* the composers of the last century, at least, employ in preference such instruments as are most adapted for open-air effects.

In modern poetry 'Hark, hark, the lark!' from 'Cymbeline,' may be regarded as the most perfect and typical specimen of the *aubade*. But the difference between this and the Provençal *alba* is of a radical nature. The *aubade* shows or implies the lovers to be divided; in the *alba* they are united; as regards

form, the first is an address, the second a dialogue, or, at least, the successive utterance of two persons. One of these speakers, and the principal of the two, is in most and, according to my opinion, in the oldest of these songs, not either of the lovers, but the faithful watcher or sentinel guarding them from intrusion. Hence we find that the wonderfully beautiful morning songs, evidently written in imitation of Provençal models by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the great mediæval German poet, are actually called 'Wächterlieder,' or sentinel songs. Reminiscences of the same kind seem also to have inspired Brangaene's warning, mingled with the love-songs of Tristan and Isolde, in Wagner's opera.

The purest and earliest form of the *alba*, like that of the Scotch ballad, was no doubt purely dramatic, the speaker or speakers beginning their monologue or dialogue without any previous introduction. The narrative stanza at the beginning, found in most of the existing *albas*, is evidently an after-thought. It became necessary, owing to the imagination of the hearers failing to supply the situation at a time, perhaps, when these hearers became partly readers, and the additional help of the joglar's action and vocal flexibility ceased in consequence. This, however, is mere conjecture from analogy, for the dates of the Provençal specimens are difficult to determine. In the magnificent *alba* by Guiraut de Bornelh, a celebrated troubadour of the spring-time of Provençal literature, the introductory stanza has been dispensed with. 'Glorious

King,' is the watchman's song, 'true light and brightness, Almighty God and Lord, grant faithful help to my friend, for I have not seen him since the night came, and soon it will be dawn.' 'Sweet friend, be you awake or asleep, sleep no longer, but gently rise, for in the East I see growing larger the star which harbingers the morn; for well I know it. And soon it will be dawn.' 'Sweet friend, I call to you in my song; sleep no longer, for I hear the bird that goes seeking the day through the grove (*ge vai geren lo jorn per lo boscatge*), and I fear that the jealous knight may assail you, and soon it will be dawn.'

'Sweet true friend,' the lover replies, in the last stanza, 'I sojourn in so glorious a place that I wish dawn and day might never appear; for the fairest lady ever born by mother I hold in my arm, and little do I heed the fell jealous knight or the dawn.'

It is strange to note the coincidence of imagery and even of expression with which the same situation has supplied the troubadour, and Shakespeare in 'Romeo and Juliet.' The simplicity, one might almost say the obviousness, of all true poetry here finds a striking illustration. Given the parting of two lovers at early morn, and the 'earliest cry of new-awakened birds' heralding or seeking the day, the morning star, the dawn, and the defiance of its perils by the lover—all this suggests itself almost as a matter of necessity. To the same simplicity of motive we have to ascribe the freshness and beauty of many of the *albas*. In them the troubadours

frequently display an intensity of language, an originality and picturesqueness of description, which we look for in vain in their more elaborate poems. What, for instance, can be more impressive in its striking symbolism than the opening address to the 'Glorious King, the true light and brightness,' or more subtle and poetic than the conception of the lark seeking or longing for the morn with its anxious cry? It is another proof of the enormous value of the popular element in artistic poetry. While in contact with this healthy spirit, the Troubadours held it unnecessary, perhaps beneath their dignity, to show the formal capabilities of their craft.

At the same time the *alba* was by no means without its formal rule or custom. This also is more or less strictly exemplified by the stanzas above quoted. The reader will notice the refrain or burden at the end of each stanza, another proof of the antiquity of the species; he will also remark the recurrence of the word '*alba*.' This word is always found in the burden, or, where that feature is wanting, in the last line of every stanza, of which sometimes it is actually the concluding word. To this quaint and evidently very primitive device the name of these poems is owing. The only exception to this rule known to me is found in an anonymous *alba* which in other important respects differs from and is inferior to the genuine poems of the class. For here, instead of an outpouring of feeling, we have a narration as of a past event suddenly interrupted by a violent diatribe against the sentinel

for 'hurrying on the day,' and concluded as abruptly by an address of the lady to her 'friend Sir Stephen,' probably the poet himself, warning him of his danger in tarrying with her.

This arrangement is quite whimsical. But even within the limits of the regular *alba*, several variations are possible. Instead of the sentinel the lover or even the lady may be the speaker, the short reply at the end of the poem being in that case allotted to the faithful friend. To this, the second important division of the morning song, belongs an anonymous poem, which, as regards beauty of diction and sentiment, marks perhaps the acme of the power of the troubadours in this direction, and for that reason may be quoted in full. Here we find perfect euphony of language combined with a truth of feeling which, especially in the refrain—changelessly reiterated from the first stanza to the last—reaches a climax of passion. The subjoined translation will enable the reader to follow the original line for line. A few remarks as to form may be deemed necessary. The poem opens with the short narrative stanza already referred to. Then follow the words of the lady, partly spoken in soliloquy, partly addressed to her lover. In the last verse we suddenly come to a short laudation of the lady's own merits, which is no doubt intended as a monologue of the watcher. From a purely poetic point of view these lines may appear an anticlimax, but they give a quaint archaic tinge to the whole conception.

## ALBA SES TITOL.

En un vergier sotz fuelha d'albespi
Tenc la domna son amic costa si
Tro la gaita crida qe l'alba vi.
Oy dieus, oy dieus, de l'alba! tan tost ve.

'Plagues a dieu ja la nueitz non falhis
Nil mieus amicx lonh de mi no s partis
Ni la gaita jorn ni alba no vis,
Oy dieus, oy dieus, de l'alba! tan tost ve.

Bels dous amicx, baizem nos, ieu e vos
Aval els pratz on chantols auzellos
Tot o fassam en despieg del gilos.
Oy dieus, oy dieus, de l'alba! tan tost ve.

Bels dous amicx, fassam un joc novel
Ins el jardin on chanton li auzel
Tro la gaita toque son caramel;
Oy dieus, oy dieus, de l'alba! tan tost ve.

Per la douss' aura q'es venguda lai
Del mieu amic bel e cortes e gai
Del sieu alen ai begut un dous rai.
Oy dieus, oy dieus, de l'alba! tan tost ve.'

'La domna es agradans e plazens
Per sa beautat la gardon mantas gens,
Et a son cor en amar lejalmens.
Oy dieus, oy dieus, de l'alba! tan tost ve.'

## ALBA

BY AN ANONYMOUS POET.

Beneath a hawthorn on a blooming lawn
A lady to her side her friend had drawn,
Until the watcher saw the early dawn.
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'Oh that the sheltering night would never flee,
Oh that my friend would never part from me,
And never might the watch the dawning see!
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'Now, sweetest friend, to me with kisses cling,
Down in the meadow where the ousels sing;
No harm shall hate and jealous envy bring.
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'There let with new delight our love abound
—The sweet-voiced birds are carolling around—
Until the watcher's warning note resound.
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'I drink the air that softly blows my way,
From my true friend, so blithe, so fair, so gay,
And with his fragrant breath my thirst allay.
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.'

'The lady is of fair and gentle kind,
And many a heart her beauty has entwined,
But to one friend is aye her heart inclined.
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.'

In the course of time, as the *alba* became more and more an established form of art, the old popular features were gradually abandoned. Instead of introducing fictitious *dramatis personæ* with fictitious dialogue, the poets begin to speak in their own proper persons, and the *alba* lapses into the ordinary rank and file of subjective lyrical forms. Only the external signs of the refrain and the recurrence of the word *alba* remain to account for the title, and even this rule has been abandoned in the curious little poem by 'Sir Stephen' above referred to. Of the variations arising from this process only one may be mentioned here, on account of its originality of conception. Guiraut Riquier is the author. Here the motive of the *alba* appears entirely reversed. For here we meet with a lover tossing sleepless on

his lonely couch and thinking of his love. To him night is full of gloom and terror, and '*e dezir vezer l'alba*' (I long to see the dawn) is the burden of his song.

To the same versatile poet we owe the representative specimen of the *serena* or even-song. Formally it resembles the morning song, with which it shares the refrain, and in it the recurrence of the verbal key-note, which in this case is *ser*, or evening. As regards its relation to the *alba*, it may be said that the same sentiment appears here in converse significance. For the *serena* is sung by a lover to whom a meeting has been promised, and who deprecates the day and its brightness that sever him from his heart's desire. Although by no means wanting in truth and poetical suggestiveness, the situation is somewhat too subtle for the imagination of the people, and there is little evidence of a popular source of the *serena*, which appears to be little more than an outgrowth and modification of the *alba* in its more artificial development.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BALADA.

THE *balada* is not to be mistaken for the ballad of modern parlance. It is, as its etymology indicates, a song serving to accompany the dance. This destination proves at once its antiquity and its popularity. There is little doubt that in some form or other the *balada* has subsisted from the times of Greek and Roman religious ceremonies down to our own days. In a country full of Southern beauty and Southern gaiety, its growth was a thing of natural necessity, like that of corn or wine. No political change or calamities could crush it. It survived the ravages of the crusaders in the thirteenth century, and the influences of 'classical' literature in the eighteenth. When Tristram Shandy entered the rich plain of Languedoc, the first thing he perceived was a lame youth whom Apollo had recompensed with a pipe, to which he had added a tambourin of his own accord, running sweetly over the prelude, and the reapers singing :

Viva la joya
Fidon la tristessa.

Unfortunately there is again little or no record

of the earlier development of this charming branch of poetry. But traces of its spirit and grace remain in the few specimens transmitted to us through the medium of the Troubadours, and these bear, in the freedom and variety of their metrical treatment, the distinct mark of their affinity with popular models. It ought to be added that the *baladas* remaining to us are mostly by anonymous authors, which would tend to prove that the more celebrated and more dignified poets kept aloof from the unsophisticated species. On the other hand, some of the specimens show all the refinement and a good deal of the artificiality of Provençal versification. One of them, for instance, is written almost entirely in what is technically called *rims dictionals*—a curious metrical device, for an explanation of which the reader is referred to the technical portion of this book. A set rule for the structure of these dance-songs it would be difficult to find, but it appears that most of them have a few introductory lines by way of prelude, after which the stanzas themselves begin. The refrain also is not unfrequent, and would suggest the falling in of a chorus—the only sign, by the way, of the existence of that important musical component. For the artistic *balada*—differing in this essentially and significantly from the popular roundelay—is supposed to be sung and the accompanying dance to be performed by a single person. The idea of a dance *en masse*, or even in couples, verbally and mimetically addressing each other, seems excluded. Hence the subjective character

of the poetry. By its contents the *balada* could not be distinguished from any other love-song. In some cases, indeed, its identification would be altogether difficult but for the heading in the MS., or the actual occurrence of the term *balada* in the poem itself, as found, for instance, in the charming song to be presently quoted. The exclamations 'Let us sing,' 'Let us dance,' which occur in modern opera and which establish at least some external connection between the two arts, are almost entirely wanting.[1] And yet the Provençal *balada* is a dance-song in the most emphatic sense of the word. The secret lies in the rhythm, the metre. This, in most of the *baladas*,

[1] A curious exception to this rule occurs in a *balada* published by Professor Bartsch from a Paris manuscript. It is evidently written in imitation of a popular model, and differs *in toto* from the spirit and diction of the poetry of the Troubadours, with which it has nothing in common but the language. Here we have a refrain of purely musical significance at the end of some of the lines, and also the exclamation of the dancers referred to in the text. Here also, curiously enough, the words take a narrative turn, thus seeming to foreshadow the gradual transition of the term ballad from its old to its modern meaning. A stanza may follow here :—

A l'entrada del tems clar, eya,
Per joya recomençar, eya,
E per jelos irritar, eya,
Vol la regina mostrar
Q'el'est est si amoroza.
Alavi', alavia, jelos,
Laissaz nos, laissaz nos
Ballar entre nos, entre nos.

('At the beginning of the bright season, eya, in order to begin again joy, eya, and to irritate the jealous, eya, the queen resolves to show how amorous she is. Away, away, ye jealous, let us, let us, dance by ourselves, by ourselves').

is graceful waving motion itself. In conjunction with the musical accompaniment the effect must have been of surpassing charm. As to the nature of this musical accompaniment an interesting passage may be found in the *Leys d'amors*. Speaking of the *dansa* the old Provençal writer asserts that it must have 'a slight and joyous tune, not quite so long as those of the *Vers* or the *Canso*, but a little more lively, such as is suited for dancing, as the name indicates. But now-a-days people use this tune very badly, for the singers hardly know how to get into a good dance rhythm. And as they are unable to do so, they have changed the tune of the *dansa* into the tune of the *redondel*, with their minims and the semibreves of their motets.' To us the melodious beauties indicated by these words are, it is to be feared, lost for ever. But even without this important aid, sufficient remains to connect the fall of the lines with the graceful harmonious action of the human body. This association of ideas is common amongst Southern nations; the Greek metrical terms *arsis* and *thesis* are derived from the lifting up and setting down of the dancers' feet. But even in the literature of Teutonic nations songs occasionally occur which act on brain and feet as would the lively rhythm of a valse by Strauss or Lanner. I will mention only a single English specimen by way of illustration. In a 'Mad-Song' called the 'Lady distracted with Love,' originally sung in Tom D'Urfey's 'Don Quixote' (first performed in 1694) and to be found in that author's 'Pills to

purge Melancholy,' especially the second division of each stanza appears to me a model of the dance-song in its northern transformation. It is supposed to depict the phase of 'mirthful madness,' and runs thus :—

Or if more influencing
Is to be brisk and airy,
With a step and a bound
And a frisk from the ground
I'll trip like any fairy.

As once on Ida dancing
Were three celestial bodies,
With an air and a face
And a shape and a grace
I'll charm like beauty's goddess.

But how infinitely more graceful than these lively verses is the soft gliding rhythm of the following Provençal stanzas!

'*Coindeta soi*,' 'I am graceful, joyous,' the lady begins,—

Coindeta soi, si cum n'ai greu cossire
Per mon marit qar nol volh nil desire.

Q'ieu beus dirai per qe son aussi droza
Coindeta soi;
Qar pauca soi joveneta e toza
Coindeta soi;
E degr'aver marit don fos joyoza
Al cui toz temps pogues jogar e rire.
Coindeta soi.

Ja deus mi sal, si ja soi amoroza
Coindeta soi;
De lui amar mia sui cobeitoza
Coindeta soi;
Ans qan lo vei ne soi tan vergonhoza
Q'en prec la mort q'el venga tost aucire.
Coindeta soi.

Mas d'una re m'en soi ben acordada
Coindeta soi;
S'il mieus amics m'a s'amor emendada
Coindeta soi;
Vel bel esper a cui me soi donada
Planh e sospir qar nol vei nil remire,
Coindeta soi.

E dirai vos de qem soi acordada
Coindeta soi;
Qel mieus amics m'a longamen amada
Coindeta soi
A li sera m'amors abandonada
El bels espers q'eu tant am e dezire,
Coindeta soi.

En aqest son fas coindeta balada
Coindeta soi;
E prec a totz qe sia lonh cantada,
Coindeta soi;
E qe la chant tota domn' ensenhada
Del mieu amic q'eu tant am e dezire.
Coindeta soi.

An attempt at translation in prose or verse would be as impossible as it would be superfluous. The charm lies in the music of the words. Moreover, the subject is by no means edifying. It is the ever recurring burden of Provençal poetry: a lady dissatisfied with her husband and openly calling for death to come and kill him soon in order that she may be united to her lover.

Essentially identical with the *balada* is the *dansa*, of which also several examples are found in the manuscripts. The difference which the *Leys d'amors* tries to establish between these and other variations of the dance-song are evidently pedantic quibbles, and, moreover, not borne out by the best models.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ARTIFICIAL FORMS OF POETRY.—THE SESTINA.

In the forms of lyrical verse hitherto considered by us we were able to trace some popular germs, considerably modified and highly developed though they might appear. But any such connection ceases in the numberless variations of verse and stanza, in which the unrivalled workmanship of the troubadours loved to shine. That this ease of inventing ever new and ever more complicated combinations frequently led to excesses of artificiality need not surprise us. Our admiration of the marvellous ingenuity displayed by the poets is mingled with regret at seeing it wasted on trifles.

The number and variety of these efforts would defy all attempts at perfect classification and nomenclature. The troubadours altogether were sparing in the use of technical terms, but even the later grammarians found it impossible to affix names to all the metrical refinements and *tours de force* in which Provençal poets delighted. It is amusing to observe the different attitude in this respect of the poets and metrical theorists of Northern France. The rhyming capacities of their language were as

inferior as their own craftsmanship to the language and the art of the troubadours. In consequence they found it desirable 'to make a little go a long way,' and, for example, dubbed with the sonorous name of 'Chant Royal' the mere repetition of the rhymes of a somewhat complicated stanza throughout a poem of moderate length: a feat performed almost unconsciously by the troubadours in numberless canzos and sirventeses. The *ballade* made celebrated, although by no means invented, by the genius of Villon, and which, by the way, differs as widely from the Provençal *balada* on the one hand, as it does from the Scotch 'ballad' on the other, is a similar contrivance of a still simpler nature. This simplicity, of course, by no means detracts from the poetic merit of these poems, and the manner, for instance, in which the refrain is used in both cases betrays considerable skill. But compared with the consummate workmanship of the troubadours, these efforts appear mere child's play.[1]

Of the elaborate rules of Provençal metrical science and practice, both as regards the rhyme and the construction of stanzas, full account will be given in the technical section. For the present it

[1] An article in the *Cornhill Magazine* (July 1877), called a 'Plea for certain Exotic Forms of Verse,' may be consulted with advantage, as regards the adoption of these French metres by some modern English poets. For modern French poetry, that charming volume 'Petit Traité de Poésie,' by Théodore de Banville, is the chief source. Of the mediæval development of his own language and the *langue d'oc* M. de Banville unfortunately says little or nothing. Villon seems the earliest author known to him. Rutebœuf he ignores.

will suffice to name a few examples chosen for their quaintness and originality rather than for any extraordinary display of workmanship.

The most important amongst these is the *sestina*. It was invented by Arnaut Daniel, the master of 'dear rhymes' and 'obscure words,' of whom and of which previous mention has been made. For his propensities in that direction Arnaut himself tenders a very plausible excuse. He shifts the responsibility from his own shoulders to those of his lady. If she were kind to him, he alleges, melodious rhythms and pleasing simple verses would naturally flow from his pen. The lady's cruelty therefore is answerable for involved sentences and harsh rhymes. The plea is not altogether without force. But Arnaut's natural tendency towards the incomprehensible and strikingly original is at the same time established beyond a doubt. One of his favourite devices was to construct a stanza without a single rhyme in the stanza itself. But instead of this the close of the first line would match with that of all the other stanzas of the poem, the second line with the second, and so forth. In one poem, for instance, the last word of the opening line of the first stanza is *larga*, that of the second stanza *embarga*, that of the third *descarga*, and so on through all the corresponding lines of the poem. To modern and northern ears the consonance thus suspended for eight or more lines is hardly perceptible. But in the south and in the middle ages this was different. Even so great a master of form as Dante highly approved of Arnaut's practice, and, what is more, avowedly imitated it ('et nos eum

secuti sumus.'—*De Vulgari Eloquio*, cap. 10). The result of this imitation is one of the sweetest love poems of the '*Canzoniere*,' the *sestina* beginning, 'Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra.' Two other poems of the same kind are attributed to Dante by some commentators, although others doubt their authenticity.

The fundamental scheme of the *sestina*, as has already been stated, is that of blank-verse stanzas, being in the relation of rhyme to other blank-verse stanzas. But here this principle is carried to a climax. For not only the consonances, but the actual rhyme-words of the first strophe are repeated throughout the poem. The difficulty of writing sense and poetry under such conditions is increased by the curiously inverted order in which these words are repeated. To give the reader an idea of the ingenuity of this contrivance, it will be necessary to write down the concluding words of the six stanzas of a celebrated *sestina* by Arnaut Daniel in the order in which they occur. The number six—both as regards the stanzas of the poem and the lines of each stanza—is the orthodox one, and has given the name to the poem. A short *tornada* or *envoi*, however, is added, and in this the six rhyme-words of the previous stanza are once more repeated.

| I. Stanza. | II. Stanza. | III. Stanza. | IV. Stanza. |
|---|---|---|---|
| intra | cambra | arma | oncle |
| ongla | intra | cambra | arma |
| arma | oncle | verga | ongla |
| verga | ongla | intra | cambra |
| oncle | verga | ongla | intra |
| cambra | arma | oncle | verga |

| V. Stanza. | VI. Stanza. | Tornada. |
|---|---|---|
| verga | ongla | ongla—oncle |
| oncle | verga | verga—arma |
| intra | cambra | cambra—intra |
| arma | oncle | |
| cambra | arma | |
| ongla | intra | |

It will be observed that the second stanza repeats the rhyme-words of the first in this order, 6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3, and exactly the same relation will be found to obtain between each stanza of the poem and its predecessor. Whether there was some hidden significance in this sequence it is impossible to tell. But one is inclined to suspect that it must have been some such attraction which induced the great Dante to imitate Arnaut Daniel's device with perfect accuracy. Or was it the pseudo-scientific regularity of the scheme, so fascinating to the mediæval mind, which attracted him? Anyhow, the fact is undeniable that Dante's poem in question, although infinitely superior, by its poetic beauty, to anything that Arnaut Daniel ever wrote, is, as regards its metrical scheme, an exact copy of the troubadour's *sestina.* Only in two minor points has Dante dared to deviate from his model, in points, too, which do not materially interfere with the position of the rhyme-words. These are, the length of the opening lines of each stanza, which in Provençal are by one foot shorter than the other verses, while in Italian they are of equal size; and the arrangement of the rhyme-words of the *tornada.* But Dante's licence in these

details makes his strict adherence to the essential idea of the form all the more significant.

It is interesting to note that the preference for the *sestina* has not been confined to mediæval poets or Romance languages. Mr. Swinburne, to mention but one instance, has essayed the form with excellent results, both in French and English. But the model he has followed is not derived from the Provençal original, nor yet from the Italian copy, but from a modified French version of the scheme. This modification consists chiefly in the use of the rhyme within the single stanzas themselves, which is wholly at variance with the original meaning of the form. Banville suggests that the stanza in this altered condition has been imitated from Petrarch. But he is quite mistaken. Petrarch, although he ostentatiously avoided reading Dante's works, has in this instance exactly followed Dante's example. Besides, he was too well acquainted with the musical significance of the stanza in question, not to know that all the lines must be *rims escars*, or, according to Dante's terminology, *claves*, that is, unmatched by rhymes in their own stanza. For a fuller account of these details I must again refer the reader to the technical portion of this book.

In connection with the *sestina* and its history in the *lingua di sì*, it may be mentioned that another important form of Dante's, and generally of Italian, poetry, the sonnet, seems to have been of indigenous, not at least of Provençal, growth. The structure of a stanza of fourteen lines containing the well-known

number and arrangement of rhymes, is in perfect accordance with the metrical principles practised by the troubadours, but the only specimen of the sonnet in the *langue d'oc* was written by an Italian poet, Dante da Maiano. It is by no means a master-piece, and remarkable chiefly for the fact that all the rhymes are of the male or monosyllabic order, an arrangement not unfrequent in Provençal, but unprecedented in Italian; the latter circumstance being perhaps the reason why an Italian poet, writing in Provençal, adopted it. Against the Provençal origin of the sonnet would also seem to speak the fact, that the word is used without any technical restriction, merely as equivalent for a song:

Un sonat fatz malvatz e bo,
E re non say de qal razo.

'I make a sonnet evil or good, what about I don't know myself,' says Guiraut de Bornelh, wishing to illustrate the wayward mood of a distracted lover. Of the poem of sixteen lines he thought no more than did Burns when he described Tam O'Shanter as 'crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet.'

The exact antipodes of the *sestina* is the *descort*, Anglicè discord, or dissonance. In the former everything is fixed by rule—position of rhymes, number and length of lines and stanzas. In the latter absolute liberty prevails regarding all these points, or rather it is the ambition of the poet to create the most bewildering divergence. But some

times even the most glaring contrasts of metre are found insufficient, and an additional discordance of idiom is resorted to. Rambaut de Vaqueiras has employed no less than five different languages or dialects to complain of the cruelty of his lady. For, like the harsh rhymes of Arnaut Daniel, all these dissonant contrivances were attributed to the feeling of unrequited love, and Guiraut de Salinhac, in a very pretty little poem, distinctly says, 'I should not compose a Discord if I met with accord and accordance at the hands of her I love.' The inventor of this curious device is said to have been one Guerin d'Apelier, a poet not otherwise known to us. His claim to immortality may appear somewhat slender under such circumstances.

Akin to the elaborate confusion of the *descort* and about on a par with it as regards artistic merit, is the sudden lapse from poetry into prose, for which Rambaut of Orange is more especially responsible. Of Rambaut and his disastrous love-affair with Beatrice de Die, the poetess, we shall hear more hereafter. As a poet he belongs to, and is indeed amongst the earliest representatives of, the artificial school which culminates in Arnaut Daniel. Rambaut is by no means without skill, and according to his own statement, 'no poet's work from the time Adam ate the apple was worth a turnip compared with his.' But his devices frequently take the form of mere eccentricities, and he never induces us, perhaps never intends us, to forget the amateurish quality of his work. The mixture of poetry and

prose alluded to in the above remarks well illustrates the lawless tendency of the noble poet.

The explanatory nature of these prose interludes induces Raynouard to class Rambaut's poem with the 'pièces avec commentaire' ('Choix,' vol. ii. p. 248). To add a kind of commentary to poetic work was a not uncommon custom in the middle ages. Dante's 'Vita Nuova' is a prominent case in point. In Provence, where a whole school of poets took pride in writing as incomprehensibly as might be, some such assistance to the weaker brethren became all the more indispensable. In most cases no doubt the joglar supplied the want by adding, after the recital of a poem, such explanatory notes as might seem most adapted to the intellectual level of his audience. Of Guillem (not Peter, as Raynouard calls him) de la Tor, the joglar, and friend of Sordello, we are told in the manuscripts that 'he knew a great many canzos and was clever and sang well. He also was a poet; but when he wanted to recite his canzos he made his commentary longer than the poem itself.' From the expression used by the biographer, *sermo de la razo*, we are led to conclude that Guillem's long-winded explanations were couched in prose. This, however, was not always the case. We know of troubadours who good-naturedly took the trouble to elucidate the darknesses of brother bards by means of poetic glosses. Guiraut Riquier, the scholar and poet, here again shines by his example. The nature of these commentaries is well illustrated by a

stanza of one of his poems which the reader will find translated in Raynouard's 'Choix' (ii. 252). Guiraut de Calanson, in one of his poems, speaking of the palace of love, says that four steps, or degrees, lead up to it. Guiraut Riquier explains that these steps are 'honour,' 'discretion,' 'gentle service,' and 'good sufferance,' much to the edification, no doubt, of mediæval readers, and especially of Count Henri de Rodez, who, under his hand and seal, testifies to Guiraut's explanation being trustworthy and to the point. The five portals of the palace and the mode of opening each individually, also find a circumstantial explanation at Guiraut's hands.

Of the *breu-doble* (double-short), again, Guiraut Riquier is the inventor, and, as far as I am aware, the sole representative. In the poem of the kind which we possess from his pen he complains of the cruelty of his lady, to which he, in imitation of other troubadours, ascribes his adoption of this new mode of utterance. 'As she will not accept my canzos at their worth,' he says, 'I write this breu-doble.' There is nothing very remarkable about this form, which, for that reason perhaps, has met with little approbation amongst the elaborate rhymsters of the later epoch. The name 'breu-doble' has been a puzzle to modern scholars. Raynouard is inclined to derive it from the shortness of the poem, which, however, would by no means account for the 'doble.' To me it seems more likely that allusion is made in a slip-shod way to the last verse of each stanza, which, although not exactly half the

length of, is at least considerably shorter than, the remainder of the lines, from which it also differs by its rhyme.

Of greater importance than the *breu-doble* is the *retroensa*, also known chiefly through Guiraut Riquier's agency. The only striking feature of this form is the refrain which, against the usage of Provençal poetry, consists of more than one line. An exceedingly pretty poem, called in the MS. 'The First Retroensa of Guiraut Riquier made in the year 1276,' is devoted to the praise of the Catalans, renowned in the middle ages as models of knightly courtesy. 'As my star has decreed,' the poet says, 'that good should not come to me from my lady, as nothing I can do will please her, as I am too weak to tear myself from her, it is time that I should be grounded in the ways of true love; and of these I can learn enough in gay Catalonia amongst the brave Catalans and their sweet ladies.' On these he proceeds to shower every imaginable compliment through a number of stanzas all bearing the harmonious burden :

Entrels Catalas valens
E las domnas avinens.

Like the *descort* and many other metrical creations of the troubadours, the *retroensa* was known to the poets of northern France. The name at least occurs in the literature of the *langue d'oïl*; but it must be confessed that, for instance, the religious song in praise of the Virgin, expressly called by the poet a *retrovange novelle*, has neither in substance nor

form anything in common with Guiraut Riquier's poem. Even the refrain has disappeared. There may perhaps have been some musical reason to account for the adoption of the name. But on that point we are, alas! completely in the dark. It is unnecessary to enter into the numerous and for the greater part arbitrary distinctions in which the subtle minds of grammarians and metrical scholars were wont to delight. Most of the divisions thus created, such as the *escondigz* (justification), the *comjatz* (literally leave-taking, i.e. the song in which the allegiance to a cruel lady is renounced), or the *torneys* (tournament song), and many others never seem to have attained distinct formal development, and the remaining specimens are very few in number.

# CHAPTER XII.

## THE TENSO.

My division hitherto has been made chiefly with regard to form. Such poetic creations as the *pastoreta* or the *balada* are, it is true, to some extent recognisable by the subject they treat. At the same time their most important characteristic remains the formal development to which this subject has given rise. This is different with the *tenso*, the song of dispute or contention. The fact of its frequently being written or supposed to be written by several persons implies the form of the dialogue. But as regards the structure of the line and the stanza, there is no generic mark to distinguish the *tenso* from the *canzo*, the *sirventes*, or any other class of artistic poetry. But in spite of this the *tenso* is of infinitely greater importance for the knowledge of Provençal life and literature than the artificial trifles we have just been dealing with. Its very existence is significant. Nothing could prove the enormous popularity of verse and rhyme in Provence more conclusively than the fact that the discussion of the most varied topics of life and manners instinctively assumed the form of poetry. Only in this way could the writers

secure readers, the reciting joglars an audience. Moreover, the mind may picture to itself a circle of noble ladies and gallant cavaliers listening to the poets arduously discussing subtle points of love and courtesy. For there is no reason to doubt that many of these songs of contention owe their origin to actual *viva voce* debate.

'The *tenso*,' the *Leys d'amors* begins its long-winded definition, 'is a combat and debate, in which each maintains and reasons some word or fact,' and beyond this somewhat vague piece of information there is little to be got from the old grammarians. They supply us with plenty of technical names, with a neat definition to each of them; but how much of this theory is drawn from the inner consciousness of the learned men, how much from the living practice of the troubadours, is a difficult question to decide. The safest way for us will be, in this and in previous instances, to rely chiefly on the remaining specimens from the best period. For further particulars the curious reader is referred to Raynouard's work ('Choix,' vol. ii. 197), where he may learn, for instance, that when a *tenso* treated of love, which, by the way, most *tensos* did, it was for some not very perceptible reason, called *partimen*, while a song of combat, in which more than two disputants took part, received the appropriate name of *torneyamen*, i.e. tournament,—turn and turn about, as we should say. Another name of the *tenso*, *jocx partitz*, of which the French term *jeu parti* is a literal transla-

tion, seems to have been less commonly used in Provence.

The principle of 'turn and turn about' has at he same time supplied the form of the *tenso*. It was but fair that to the various combatants the same advantages should be granted, and hence the number of stanzas allotted to each is exactly the same. Even the right of a last appeal in the shape of a *tornada* is free to all. Some advantage might accrue to the first speaker from the choice of rhyme and metre, which had to be repeated exactly by his antagonist or antagonists. The reproduction of one of Arnaut Daniel's hard-rhymed stanzas might have been a sore task to some of the more popular troubadours. But this slight privilege was more than counterbalanced by a duty. For, as a rule, the *tenso* begins with a challenge of one poet to another to choose one side of an argument, the first spokesman undertaking to defend the opposite view, whichever it may turn out to be. Impartiality could not well go further.[1] In case of two antagonists only, the rhymes are frequently changed after a couple of stanzas, that is after one argument and counter-argument, but the continuation of the same rhymes throughout the poem is by no means of rare occurrence.

There is no reason to doubt that in most cases

[1] According to the *Leys d'amors*, this choice of one of two arguments proposed by one troubadour to another, is the characteristic feature of the *partimen* in distinction from the *tenso* generally.

*sos* we find in the manuscripts are records of discussions sustained by different poets, either he pen or by word of mouth. In many cases, ver, the antagonists are as undoubtedly ficti- personages brought upon the scene for the se of displaying the author's versatility of style easoning. Peirol, for instance, in a very pretty introduces Love himself as his antagonist. god tries to shake the poet's resolution to join crusaders. 'The Turks and Arabs,' he pleads, l never leave the Tower of David for all your sions. I give you good and gentle counsel: ve and sing.' But the poet remains firm. He not break his sacred promise. At the same time re is a ring of latent melancholy in his words when admits that 'many men must part, and leave ir true loves in tears, who, if King Saladin did t exist, might have stayed at home joyfully.'

At other times the troubadours enter into dis- ussion with antagonists who, although not abso- utely symbolical or fabulous, yet distinctly bear the mark of a fictitious origin. Such a character, for instance, is the Genoese lady with whom Rambaut de Vaqueiras—one of the chief representatives of the *tenso*—holds amorous converse. The amor- ousness is, however, wholly one-sided, for the lady, the wife of an honest merchant, rejects the trouba- dour's offers with utter contempt and with an energy of diction more creditable to her virtue than to her politeness. The vigour of her language is further increased by the homely dialect of her city in which

she is made to speak, and which contrasts strikingly with the euphonious phrases of the courtly poet. But her virtue is proof against the most alluring charms of the *langue d'oc*. Adding insult to injury, she at last exclaims: 'Mountebank, I don't value your Provençal a Genoese farthing; I don't understand you any more than I should a German or a native of Sardinia or Barbary.' All this, it need hardly be added, is nothing but a clever skit of the troubadour's own devising.

To the same category also belongs the poem in which Peire Duran relates, at some length, the mutual grievances of a husband and wife on a matter intimately connected with domestic happiness. Another poem of the same class is remarkable by a deviation from the usual form. For instead of an entire stanza being allotted to each person, the speech here changes after every two lines, and at the end of the stanza after one line. The dialogue in this manner becomes decidedly more lively, but the abruptness of these incessant changes seems to have deterred other troubadours from adopting Albert's innovation. Strictly speaking, the poem in question hardly comes under the definition of *tenso* as established by the *Leys d'amors*; for instead of a discussion we have here nothing but assurances of mutual love and good will.

Very different from this is the second and larger class of *tensos*, in which two real troubadours discuss some subject of every-day life and love. The variety of topics makes this part of the litera-

ture an especially valuable source for the study of Provençal customs and morals. Sometimes an abstract problem is started, such as the respective advantages of wealth and wisdom, very seriously discussed by two minor troubadours. 'I would sooner possess wisdom,' says the virtuous Guillem, 'which must remain with me, than wealth, which in my opinion is of little avail to those who possess it. For one can easily fall from high to low estate, but science does not fall, because she is seated firmly. He who possesses wisdom is rich in his shirt.' But his antagonist, nothing daunted, upholds the advantages of the independence and freedom from care derived from the possession of riches. 'Even Aristotle,' he replies, 'the foremost among the wise, accepted presents, and so did Virgil, he who lies buried near the strand at Naples. 'I prefer giving to asking.' The heavy artillery of learning having thus been brought into action, the troubadours continue for some time to pelt each other with classical and Biblical names and facts, without, however, producing the slightest impression on the hostile positions. Finally, both appeal to the arbitration of a mutual friend, as is their wont in such cases.

Infinitely more interesting, although less edifying, is a *tenso* in which two celebrated troubadours, Bernart de Ventadorn and Peirol, express their opinions as to the mutual relations of personal feeling and artistic creation. Here we have no longer to deal with a logical fencing-match, but with the utterance of personal experience. Such a maxim

as 'Little is worth the song that does not come from the heart,' expressed by Peirol, reflects the highest credit on the psychological and poetic insight of that troubadour. On the other hand, it is amusing to watch the attitude of a light-hearted poet and lover, treating his muse as he treats his mistress, and winding up with something very like a boast of secret favours—which Bernart de Ventadorn assumes, and which is strangely at variance with the gentle sentimental character of his life and work. Believers in the migration of fables will be pleased to find here a slightly altered version of the old story of 'fox and grapes,' and the poem as a whole may be regarded as an admirable specimen of the elegant grace of Provençal thought and versification. For these reasons it may follow here as transcribed by Professor Bartsch :—

BERNARTZ DE VENTADORN E' N PEIROLS.

'Peirol, cum avetz tant estat
Que non fezetz vers ni chanso ?
Respondetz mi per cal razo,
S'o laissetz per mal o per be,
Per ir' o per joi o per que ?
Que saber en voill la vertat.'

'Bernart, chantars nom ven a grat
Ni gaires nom platz nim sab bo ;
Mas car voletz nostra tenso
N'ai era mon talan forsat.
Pauc val chans que del cor non ve ;
E pos jois d'amor laissa me,
Eu ai chant e deport laissat.'

'Peirol mout i faitz gran foudat
S'o laissatz per tal ocaizo ;

S'eu agues avut cor fello,
Mortz fora un an a passat,
Qu'enquer non posc trobar merce:
Ges per tant de chant nom recre
Car doas perdas no m'an at.'

'Bernart, ben ai mon cor mudat,
Que totz es autres c'anc non fo:
Non chantarai mais en perdo;
Mas de vos voill chantetz jasse
De cellei qu'en grat nous o te,
E que perdatz vostr' amistat.'

'Peirol maint bon mot n'ai trobat
De leis, c'anc us no m'en tenc pro;
E s'il serva cor de leo
Nom a ges tot la mon serrat;
Qu'en sai tal una, per ma fe,
Qu'am mais, s'un baisar mi cove
Que de leis sil m'agues donat.'

'Bernart, bes es acostumat,
Qui mais non pot, c'aissi perdo;
Que la volps al sirier dis o:
Quan l'ac de totas partz cercat,
Las sireisas vic loing de se,
E dis que non valion re:
Atressi m'avetz vos gabat.'

'Peirol, sireisas sont o be
Mas mal aja eu si ja cre
Que la volps non aja tastat.'

'Bernart, nom entramet de re
Mas pesam de ma bona fe
Car non i ai ren gazaignat.'

## TENSO BETWEEN BERNART DE VENTADORN AND SIR PEIROL.

'Peirol, how is it that for such a long time you have been without making verse or canso? Tell me what is the reason that you have ceased singing. Is it for evil or good, for sorrow or for joy, or for what? for I will know the truth of it.'

'Bernart, singing does not come pleasant to me, and I have

lost all taste and liking for it. But as you insist upon having a tenso with me, I have forced my inclination. Little worth is the song that does not come from the heart, and as love has left me, I have left song and dalliance.'

'Peirol, you commit great folly, if you leave these off for such a reason; if I had harboured wrath in my heart, I should have been dead a year ago, for I also can find no love nor mercy. But for all that I do not abandon singing, for there is no need of my losing two things.'

'Bernart, my heart is changed, and wholly different from what it was: I shall no longer sing in vain. But I wish you may sing for ever of her who gives you no thanks, and waste your friendship.'

'Peirol, many a good word have I said of her, although none has ever been of any benefit to me. If she wants to keep her lion's heart, she cannot lock me out from all the world; and I know one of whom I would prefer the grant of a kiss to the free gift of one by her.'

'Bernart, it is a common thing that he who cannot win should make light of the loss; just as the fox spoke to the cherry-tree. For after she had tried everything she still saw the cherries a long way off, and then she said that they were worth nothing; and that is exactly how you talk.'

'Peirol, the cherries are all very well, but evil befal me if I believe that the fox never had a taste of them.'

'Bernart, that is not my affair, but I regret my good faith; for I have gained nothing by it.'

It is now necessary to mention one of the most celebrated and most characteristic *tensos* in Provençal literature—a kind of battle-royal in which each of the three contending poets tries to outshine the others by brilliancy of wit and subtlety of argument. The subject, it need hardly be added, is love. But thereby hangs a tale which it will be best to relate in the words of the old manuscripts. 'Savaric de Mauleon,' says the biographer of that well-known troubadour, 'went to Benaujatz to see the Vis-

countess Lady Guillelma, and he turned his mind towards her. And he took with him Sir Elias Rudel, lord of Bergerac, and Jaufre Rudel of Blaia. All three wooed her love, and each of them had been her cavalier aforetime; but none knew it of the other. All three were seated with her, one on one side, the other on the other, and the third in front of her. Each of them gazed at her lovingly, and she, who was the boldest lady ever seen, began to look at Sir Jaufre Rudel lovingly, for he was sitting in front, and she took the hand of Sir Elias Rudel de Bergerac and pressed it very amorously, and she put her foot on that of Sir Savaric with a smile and a sigh. None knew of the favour the others had received, till they had left the castle, when Sir Jaufre Rudel told Sir Savaric how the lady had looked at him, and Sir Elias related that about the hand. And Savaric, when he heard that each of them had found such favour, became very sad; but he said nothing of what had happened to himself, but he called Gaucelm Faidit and Uc de la Bacalaria, and asked them in a stanza who had received the highest favour and love at her hands.' This stanza is the opening one of the *tenso* in question. It runs thus :—

Gaucelm Faidit, and good Sir Hugh,
Three amorous questions I will ask :
Choose ye what side seems good to you,
The third to hold must be my task :—
One lady's charms three knights inspire ;
She, sore beset by their desire,
Would fain each lover's wish abet,
When all the three with her are met.

At one she looks with loving eye:
The other's hand takes tenderly;
Gladdens the third with footstep sly.
To tell me now I ask of ye,
Who was most favoured of the three.

Fortunately the two troubadours prefer the ogle and the shake by the hand respectively, and permit poor Savaric at least to defend his own cause, which he does with more spirit than might be expected under the circumstances. Into the arguments of the amorous poets it would lead us too far to enter. Suffice it to say that each firmly stands to his opinion, and that the cause is ultimately submitted to the arbitration of three ladies. The decision of these fair and no doubt highly competent judges the manuscripts have unfortunately not preserved.

Perhaps the reader would care to know a little more of the curious love-affair between Savaric and the Lady Guillelma, and as a second incident of it also became the origin of a *tenso*, it may find a place here. Savaric, we are told, had been faithfully attached to the lady for years, but she paid him back with false promises, and never would grant him a favour. Many a time he came to her, at her demand, from Poitou to Gascony, by land and by sea, only to find himself disappointed again on his arrival. But he, the manuscript adds, was so enamoured that he never discovered her falsehood. His friends, however, did, and thought of means to release him from such thraldom. For that purpose they introduced him to a beautiful and noble lady of Gascony, who was but too willing to accept the

service of so celebrated a troubadour, and appointed a day for a rendezvous. News of this affair was brought to Guillelma, and jealousy now effected what true love had attempted in vain. No sooner had she ascertained the time of the appointment, than she sent a message to Savaric, summoning him to her presence for the very same day, and promising him at last the fulfilment of his wishes. The messenger was Uc de San Cyr the troubadour, and biographer of Savaric, to whose friendship he was introduced on this occasion. He relates how he came to the court of Savaric, who, by the way, was a rich and powerful baron, and delivered his message. One of the guests of Savaric was the provost of Limoges, and to him the perplexed poet submitted the case, proposing to discuss the claims of the two ladies in a *tenso*. This *tenso* is in existence. The provost is decidedly in favour of the new love. He points out to Savaric that Guillelma's favour is the result of jealousy, while the kindness of the other lady would be ill rewarded by the poet's disappointing her. But the warmth with which poor Savaric pleads for his old attachment, and even speaks with some contempt of a love too easily granted, shows but too plainly that the cure of his infatuation was anything but perfect. In this case also the decision of the question is referred to three ladies, but again there is no record of their verdict. Of another *tenso* still more intimately connected with a real and most melancholy love-affair we shall have to speak further on.

There was still another use to which the *tenso* was occasionally put. When two troubadours owed each other a grudge, instead of fighting it out with the sword, they frequently challenged each other to a song of combat. Like most polemical poems in the *langue d'oc* these personal *tensos*, for so they may conveniently be called, are full of the grossest slander. The wonder is that, with all this spite and rage, the poet always preserves sufficient equanimity to adhere to the strictest rules of the art, and even to reproduce the exact metre and rhyme chosen by his adversary as the medium for his abuse. Uc de St. Cyr, of whom we have just heard, appears amongst the chief representatives of this branch of literature, in a manner more creditable to his eloquence than to his personal character. He was the younger son of an impoverished family, and depended for his maintenance on the liberality of his protectors. His lasting friendship with Savaric de Mauleon has been already mentioned, but unfortunately, in other cases, relations of a similar kind seem to have ended in unkindness and open enmity. How far the responsibility may have lain with the poet, it is impossible to say, but the fact of his appearing twice as the declared antagonist of a former benefactor throws grave doubts on his gratitude. The first instance alluded to is a quarrel with the Viscount of Turenne, in whose service the poet seems to have been for some time.

'Viscount,' he exclaims, 'how can I endure the hardships you impose upon me? Night and day

you make me ride from one place to another without rest or sleep. Truly, in the company of Martin d'Algai,[1] I could not be worse off; even my food appears scanty.'

'You know, Uc de St. Cyr,' is the Viscount's answer, 'if you do not want to tell a lie, that I did not send for you from Quercy to show you my lands; on the contrary, I was much annoyed when I saw you coming. May God punish me if I do not wish, with all my heart, that you had gone to Spain instead!'

In another *tenso*, of the same kind, Uc's position is still more precarious from a moral point of view—at least if we believe the charge implied in his antagonist's answer. From this it would appear that the poet was capable of taunting with poverty a man to whose bounty he owed his own wealth.

'Count,' he says, 'you need not be afraid or anxious on my account. I have not come to ask or demand anything from you; for I have all I want. But I perceive that money is a scarce article with you; therefore I have not the heart to ask you anything; on the contrary, it would be a great mercy if I made you a present.'

'Uc de St. Cyr,' Count Rodez replies, 'I am sorry for having dismissed wealthy you, who came to me poor, naked, and miserable. You have cost me more than two bowmen or horsemen; truly, if I had offered you a horse you would not have refused it.'

[1] A notorious freebooter of the time.

Of the enormous importance of poetry in the literary, the social, the political, and the religious life of mediæval Provence, of the variety of functions which it assumed, and the energy and success with which it did justice to each of them, the modern reader can hardly form an idea. A passage with which the troubadour Raimon Vidal opens his learned treatise on metrical art, called 'Razos de Trobar,' will throw some light on the intense and wide-spread love of song characterising this outburst of long pent-up feeling. 'All Christendom,' he says, 'Jews and Saracens, the emperor, kings, dukes, counts and viscounts, commanders, vassals, and other knights, citizens and peasants, tall and little, daily give their minds to singing and verse-making, by either singing themselves or listening to others. No place is so de-
overy of [illegible] of the way, that, as long as men
spired to knighthood not sung either by single per-
or his position entitle ether; even the shepherds in
eturn, accuses Albert of e no greater joy than song.
ncluding perjury and treache in the world are made
As to cowardice he says: 'I , and no evil talk, that
Oliver in the use of arms, it a me and verse by a trou-
re no Roland either.' In thi every day.'
ontinues for some time, w the nature of a poetry
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universal rising of Christian nations, a common effort of pious revenge on the Painim, an invasion finally of the eastern by the western world, such as history has rarely witnessed. Gibbon and Chateaubriand, Hume and Joseph de Maistre, may look on the crusades in very different ways. In one thing they cannot but agree, viz., that the religious impulse of which they were the tangible result tended to remould and imbue with a new principle of life the whole of western civilisation. The only mental product of this profound revolution of feeling which concerns us here, is the idealised conception of chivalry in immediate connection with the enthusiastic movement alluded to. This idea included those others of honour, of prowess, of candour, of loyalty, which, even in modern parlance, we are wont to comprehend in the word chivalrous. But the noblest duty of the mediæval knight was his service and devotion to the lady of his heart, a feeling akin to the religious veneration of that type of immaculate womanhood which the wisdom of the Roman Church had placed on a par almost with the Deity itself. These feelings, common as they are to the mediæval poetry of all nations, were expressed with more than ordinary fervour by the knightly singers of Southern France. At the same time they appear here with so many national and individual modifications, as to impart to the study of Provençal literature, beyond the historical and philological importance of its monuments, an additional human interest.

Take, for instance, the idea of love as reflected in the poetry of the troubadours. It is true that many of their songs breathe the purest and most ardent spirit of romantic veneration; one chief division of Provençal poetry, the *canzo*, or song proper, is exclusively devoted to this loving worship. But the bold natural common sense of the French character always acted as a wholesome antidote to the tendency of purely spiritual sublimation. We have already observed the essentially realistic view which Count William took of the *grande passion*, and we shall hear before long that the weaknesses of their fair idols were a favourite butt of the satiric iconoclasm of more than one of the troubadours.

This leaven of scepticism is observable even amongst the effusions of religious enthusiasm. I am not alluding to the active part taken by many of the troubadours in the struggle of Count Raimond of Toulouse, the protector of the Albigeois, against the ravaging hordes of Simon de Montfort, the champion of Papal supremacy. This part was rather of a national than of a religious kind;[1] for it must be remembered that the crusade against

[1] Attacks on the morals of the clergy are frequent in Provençal literature; but of poems containing heretical opinions in matters of dogma I know only one, by Peire Cardinal. It is a passionate plea against the eternity of punishment, and might have been quoted with advantage in a recent ecclesiastical trial. It is, however, by no means unlikely that other poems of heterodox import may have been accidentally or wilfully destroyed in the course of ages. The fact that a bull of Pope Innocent IV., dated 1245, prohibits to students the use of Provençal, as a language of heretics, tends to confirm this surmise.

the Provençal heretics implied at the same time an onslaught of Northern centralisation on Southern independence, the success of which finally resulted in the abrupt and total decline of Provençal literature. What I was referring to is a curious and most charming poem by Marcabrun, in which that celebrated troubadour seems to oppose the excessive passion of the age for crusading expeditions. This was a somewhat ticklish subject, and apt to bring a peaceful poet into unpleasant collision with hierarchical powers. To cautious considerations of this kind we probably owe one of the sweetest conceptions of Provençal poetry; one of the rare instances, moreover, in which a description of beautiful scenery has been successfully attempted. For, as a rule, the troubadours show little *rapport* with outward nature, and their occasional allusions to flowers and blue skies are generally of a conventional character.

Marcabrun introduces us into the full splendour of southern spring; the trees are strewn with the young year's blossoms, and resonant with the songs of birds. By the brook in the orchard we see a lonely maiden, the beautiful daughter of the châtelain. Little she heeds the bloom of the spring, or the joyous note of the songsters. Her tears mingle with the brook, and bitterly she complains to 'Jesus, Lord of the world, for great grief has come to me through thee. The best men have gone to distant lands at thy behest, and with them my true love, bravest among the brave.' The poet here steps in

to interrupt the lady's lament with gentle remonstrance. 'Your tears,' he suggests, 'will injure your face and complexion; moreover He, who has adorned the trees with blossoms, may turn your grief into joy.' But the lady turns a deaf ear to his comfortings. 'Sir,' she replies, 'I willingly believe that God in the next world may vouchsafe me his grace; but in this I have lost my true love.'[1] Supposing the tendency of the poem to be such as I have surmised it to be, it must be owned that Marcabrun has carried out his purpose in the most ingenious manner. Pious souls might be referred to the religious commonplaces, introduced for safety sake, while more intelligent listeners could not fail to perceive the poet's real meaning in the naïve pleadings of the desolate girl. An analogous mode of treatment of the identical subject occurs, by the way, in a poem by the excellent North-French trouvère Rutebœuf. He also describes a discussion between an assailant and a staunch defender of the crusades. To keep up appearances, the wicked sceptic had ultimately to confess himself convinced, but the reader easily perceives that the greater force of argument is, and is meant to be, with the vanquished.

From various statements in the above remarks, the reader will have seen that the popular idea of a troubadour as a singer of love, and of nothing but love, is as incorrect and one-sided as popular ideas

[1] This poem may be found in Bartsch's 'Chrestomathie Provençale,' 2nd edition, p. 55.

frequently are. There is, indeed, no important topic of political, social, and literary history of the time, which does not find an echo in the poetry of these gay singers. The form of art in which these and kindred questions are treated is collectively called the *sirventes*,[1] and the study of this branch of Provençal literature is of engrossing interest, both by the variety of contemporary topics touched upon, and by the display of brilliant wit and trenchant personal satire, with which many of these songs abound; the latter feature being in strong contrast with the charming but somewhat monotonous sweetness of the *canzo*, or love-song. The *sirventes* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has been compared with the newspaper press of the nineteenth; and it may indeed seem doubtful to which of these two organs of public opinion the greater influence on the contemporary mind ought to be attributed, leaving, of course, the international importance of modern journalism out of the question. The rapid circulation of the censuring *sirventes* amongst those concerned was amply provided for by vagrant joglars, whose lively recitations gave additional zest to satirical points; and the boldness and fierce

[1] The exact meaning of the word *sirventes* is not easy to define. It is evidently derived from the Latin verb *servire*, and may therefore loosely be rendered as the 'song of a serving-man in praise or in the interest of his master.' The *Leys d'amors* calls the *sirventes* 'a song which contains censure and vituperation, and castigates wicked and malignant people.' This tolerably meets the case. The use of the word by later grammarians for a song in praise of the Virgin is a manifest corruption of its original meaning.

castigation of public or private enemies indulged in by the troubadours throw all similar attempts of modern writers into the shade. Cobbett and the early Quarterly Reviewers would appear mild in such juxtaposition. The eagerness with which princes and great nobles tried to ward off, or return with equal force, the attacks of poets infinitely their inferiors in rank and power, proves the dangerous nature of the weapon.

According to its subject-matter the *sirventes* may be divided into four important groups: the personal, the social-and-political, the moral, and the religious *sirventes*; the last-named term being applicable chiefly to the poems relating to the Albigeois crusade. Theological and more especially dogmatic subjects gave little concern to the troubadours, although they had a keen eye for the weaknesses of the clergy both secular and monastic. All these classes of polemic literature will be treated at length in the course of this work. To complete the outline of the subject it is necessary only to refer briefly to two minor branches of the *sirventes*. They are the *planh* or complaint, and the crusader's song, the former belonging more especially to the personal, the latter to the religious, class of poems.

The *planh* is a poem written on the death of a mistress, a friend, or a protector. It no doubt was amongst the duties of courtly poets to deplore the loss of the latter in suitable terms, and by far the greater number of complaints remaining to us belong to the species of official poetry. But in spite

of this there is the true ring of sorrow in most of these songs, a fact which shows the frequent existence of genuinely cordial relations between the poets and their noble patrons. 'Like one,' says Folquet of Marseilles, 'who is so sad that he has lost the sense of sorrow, I feel no pain or sadness; all is buried in forgetfulness. For my loss is so overpowering that my heart cannot conceive it, nor can any man understand its greatness.' The object of this pathetic and no doubt sincere sorrow is not, as might be expected, a beloved friend of equal station or a mistress, but Barral, the mighty viscount of Marseilles, at whose court Folquet had been staying for a long time, and to whose wife, Adalasia, he was passionately attached.

Quite as genuine and historically more important is the song in which Gaucelm Faidit deplores the premature death of England's heroic King Richard. 'It is hard on me,' he says, 'that the greatest loss and the greatest pain I ever had, and which I shall deplore for aye and ever, that this loss I must announce and proclaim in a song. The great and glorious Richard, the king of the English, is dead. Ah, God! what grief, what a loss! How strange the word sounds, and how sad it is to hear! He must have an obdurate heart who can bear it.' The poet then proceeds to sing the praises of his lost protector in enthusiastic terms. 'The king is dead—not for a thousand years has there been a man so brave, so kind, so bold, so liberal. For Alexander, the king who conquered Darius, did not, I believe, show such

largess, nor are Charles and Arthur equal to his worth!' All this may seem exaggerated and hyperbolical on the ground of historic criticism and moral principle; but Gaucelm Faidit did not see in Richard the rebellious son of former, and the tyrannic ruler of later days. To him he was the centre of gaiety and splendour, the fount of wealth and comfort, and, there is little doubt, a beloved friend withal.

Of another Complaint devoted by Bertran de Born to the praise of Richard's ill-fated brother Henry we shall hear on a later occasion. It marks the climax of power and beauty reached by this section of poetic art.

Of the close connection between the poetry of the troubadours and the impulse which sent thousands of knights and varlets of all nations to the distant East, general mention has already been made. The more immediate result of this affinity of spirit is the song of the crusade, a poem that is designed to inspire men with valour and sacred ambition in the service of the Lord. It is a characteristic fact that the first troubadour of whom we have historic knowledge has left us a remarkable song of this order.

Guillem of Poitiers, the reader will remember, led anything but an exemplary life. But towards the end of it he repented, and resolved to atone for his evil ways by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at the head of a large army. So important an event in his life and thought the poet could not let pass in

silence. He wrote a song in commemoration of it, which is a document of deepest interest both as regards its psychological and its historic import. It betrays a heart loth to leave the world's joy and yet urged on to a holy purpose by the sense of a deep necessity of regeneration. 'I go into exile,' he says, 'and leave behind me my son surrounded by warfare and fear and danger; for his neighbours are malevolent men.' He conjures his cousin and his overlord to take care of the unprotected boy, who without such help would be lost. He next bids a sad adieu to knightly splendour and to the joys of love, and in token of sincere repentance he humbly asks the forgiveness of all whom he may have offended. The tone of the song is exceedingly sad, and full of a latent presentiment of death. On the other hand we miss the holy enthusiasm of the early crusaders. There is no appeal to the faithful, no proud determination to liberate the Redeemer's tomb by deeds of valour, such as abound in similar poems by other troubadours. It has indeed been doubted whether the song referred to the crusade at all, and not rather to some shorter pilgrimage or temporary retirement from the world. But for a minor event of that kind the fear of danger for his son and country appears too grave, and it seems on the other hand but natural that a man of Guillem's temperament and habits should speak of a separation from the haunts of his pleasure and the scenes of his glory as a dreary banishment. In his feeling this grief and disappointment would naturally be upper-

most, but all the more worthy of emulation must have been the example of a resolve which in spite of all this remained unshaken. From this point of view Count Guillem's poem holds a prominent place amongst the songs of the crusade.

In most cases, however, these songs take the form of an appeal or admonition addressed to the people, and, more frequently still, to individual princes and nobles. These are exhorted to abandon their worldly interests and discords, and join hands in the sacred endeavour. The allusions to persons and contemporary events incidentally introduced make some of these poems exceedingly valuable material for the historian. Others again are interesting owing to the genuine elevation of the heart that speaks from every line and inspires the work with true poetic passion. Three songs by Pons de Capduelh, a noble poet of Puy Sainte Marie, deserve mention. They all refer to the crusade against Saladin, and must have been written about the year 1188. As regards elevation of language they are unsurpassed in Provençal literature. The second especially is a masterpiece of simple and yet impressive diction. Unfortunately its length forbids the quotation of the original together with an English version. The latter alone, on the other hand, would convey too imperfect an idea of the tone and diction of the poem. As a middle course I have subjoined a rendering which occurs in the French edition of Dietz's 'Poesie der Troubadours.'

'Qu'il soit désormais notre guide et notre pro-

tecteur, celui qui guida les trois rois à Bethléem. Sa miséricorde nous indique une voie par laquelle les plus grands pécheurs, qui la suivent avec zèle et franchise, arriveront à leur salut. Insensé, insensé l'homme qui, par un vil attachement à ses terres et à ses richesses, négligera de prendre la croix, puisque par sa faute et par sa lâcheté il perd à la fois son honneur et son Dieu.

'Voyez quelle est la démence de celui qui ne s'arme point. Jésus, le Dieu de vérité, a dit à ses apôtres qu'il fallait le suivre, et que pour le suivre on devait renoncer à tous ses biens, à toutes ses affections terrestres; le moment est venu d'accomplir son saint commandement. Mourir outre mer pour son nom sacré est préférable à vivre en ces lieux avec gloire; oui, la vie est ici pire que la mort. Qu'est-ce qu'une vie honteuse? Mais mourir en affrontant ces glorieux dangers, c'est triompher de la mort même et s'assurer une éternelle félicité.

'Humiliez-vous avec ardeur devant la croix, et par ses mérites vous obtiendrez le pardon de vos péchés; c'est par la croix que notre Seigneur a racheté vos fautes et vos crimes—lorsque sa sainte pitié fit grâce au bon larron, lorsque sa justice s'appesantit sur le méchant, et qu'il accueillit même le repentir de Longin. Par la croix il sauva ceux qui étaient dans la voie de la perdition; enfin il souffrit la mort et ne la souffrit que pour notre salut. Malheureux donc quiconque ne s'acquitte pas envers la générosité d'un Dieu.

'A quoi servent les conquêtes de l'ambition?

En vain vous soumettrez tous les royaumes qui sont de ce côté de la mer, si vous êtes infidèles et ingrats à votre Dieu. Alexandre avait soumis toute la terre. Qu'emporta-t-il en mourant? Le seul linceul mortuaire. Oh! quelle folie de voir le bien et de prendre le mal, et de renoncer pour des objets vains et périssables à un bonheur qui ne peut manquer ni jour ni nuit! Tel est l'effet de la convoitise humaine; elle aveugle les mortels, elle les égare, et ils ne reconnaissent pas leurs erreurs.

'Qu'il ne se flatte pas d'être compté parmi les preux, tout baron qui n'arborera pas la croix et qui ne marchera pas aussitôt à la délivrance du saint tombeau! Aujourd'hui les armes, les combats, l'honneur, la chevalerie, tout ce que le monde a de beau et de séduisant, nous peuvent procurer la gloire et le bonheur du céleste séjour. Ah! que désireraient de plus les rois et les comtes, si, par leurs hauts faits, ils pouvaient se racheter des flammes dévorantes où les réprouvés seront éternellement tourmentés?

'Sans doute il est excusable celui que la vieillesse et les infirmités retiennent sur nos bords; mais alors il doit prodiguer ses richesses à ceux qui partent; c'est bien fait d'envoyer quand on ne peut aller, pourvu que l'on ne demeure pas par lâcheté ou indifférence. Que répondront au jour du jugement ceux qui seront restés ici malgré leur devoir, quand Dieu leur dira: "Faux et lâches chrétiens, c'est pour vous que je fus cruellement battu de verges; c'est pour vous que je souffris la mort"? Ah! le plus juste alors tressaillira lui-même d'épouvante.'

We must now for a moment return to the *sirventes* generally, and note, for the sake of completeness, one or two more of its separate branches. In some of the biographies we meet with the use of a curious term, *sirventes joglaresc*, which at first sight would lead one to expect a poem more especially designed for recitation by a joglar. But such a distinction cannot be substantiated by facts. We know that not only all *sirventeses*, but all *canzos* as well, were to a great extent dependent for their promulgation on the professional singers and reciters. Moreover, the manuscripts seem to indicate quite a different meaning. They generally add by way of explanation that the *sirventes* so denominated dealt out both praise and vituperation, the former of course to the worthy, the latter to the vicious. But why and when such a meaning came to be connected with such a term is one of the unsolved riddles of literature.

Little more than a whim is the *canzo-sirventes*, a mixture of the love-song and the non-love-song, generally beginning with a satirical discussion of personal or public affairs and winding up with the praise of a lady. No transition is made, the abruptness of the change being evidently considered an additional charm. No wonder that Peire Vidal, one of the most eccentric troubadours, favoured the mongrel type. Of it and of him, more anon.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CANZO.

WITH the *canzo* we have at last reached the climax and innermost essence of the poetry of the troubadours. I have in the above called the idea of the troubadour as exclusively a singer of love a one-sided one. So indeed it is, but at the same time the lingering of this feature and this feature alone in the memory of ages distinctly proves its prevailing importance in the picture which the popular mind conceived and treasured up. And the *vox populi* in literature, as in other matters, is generally found to be after all the voice of good sense and unsophisticated truth.

All true poetry must be the offspring of its time; it must show as in a mirror the best contemporary thoughts and ideas. Now there is no doubt that the purest and most poetic motive of early mediæval life was the *cultus* of the new-found ideal of womanhood. To this worship, therefore, the troubadour devoted his noblest endeavour, and the result is a literature in some respects unique in the history of all nations.

On first becoming acquainted with the amatory

verses of Provençal poets, one is apt to give way to a feeling of disappointment. Everything is different from what one's vague idea of the subject had led him to expect. There is here no wild storm of passion, no untrammelled effusion of sentiment. On the contrary, the stream of emotion, and sometimes not a very powerful stream, seems to run in a regular channel—a channel, to continue the simile, with the marble sides and facings of a rigid form, and the narrowness of which admits of little individual bubbling. The last-mentioned feature, viz., the want of individual peculiarities, is especially noticeable in the poets of the *langue d'oc*. There are of course differences, as there are, and must be, in all other schools and coteries of literary workers. Bernart de Ventadorn is an infinitely more impassioned and more loveable singer than the affected Rambaut of Orange; and the Monk of Montaudon, when he deigns to write a love-song, cannot wholly disguise his sardonic vein, nor does he ever attain to the lyrical sweetness of Guillem de Cabestanh. But such distinctions do not meet the eye of the casual observer with the same force as is the case with the poets of other nationalities. One of the reasons is the perfection of formal development which universally prevails. In modern France or England it is easy to know one poet from another, and attribute to each his place in the republic of song by the quality of his verse *quâ* verse. There are, in short, those who can and those who cannot write poetry. But with the troubadours it was otherwise: they all knew their

business equally well; there were no bunglers amongst them.

We here once again touch upon that pride and bane of Provençal poetry—form. That much freshness of expression, much genuine fervour of inspiration, has been sacrificed to this moloch, is not a matter of doubt. The sameness of type observable in a whole galaxy of gifted and no doubt variously gifted poets cannot be explained from any other cause. For not only did the observance of certain external niceties absorb a great part of the poet's energy, but the habit of such observance gradually encroached even on his cast of thought. Certain feelings and ideas gradually grew into established formulas. The absence of a true sympathy with nature in the works of the troubadours is a case in point. Originally such a feeling must have existed; the very common occurrence at the beginning of a love-song of some remarks on the beauties of spring, the song of birds, and the like, tends to prove it. But unfortunately the similarity of these preludes and the narrow range of objects to which they refer are a proof equally strong of the detrimental force of the 'set speech' above alluded to. For one Gaucelm Faidit, who feels genuine delight in the '*rossinholet salvatge*,' the 'wild nightingale,' there are twenty troubadours who speak of the sweet-toned songster with perfect indifference and merely as a matter of custom. Even the main and moving subject of the *canzo*, the lady, does not always escape the same fate. She also frequently becomes a

barren symbol to be described according to a certain code of beauty and to be addressed in certain well-turned phrases.

Another striking defect in Provençal poetry may to a great extent be derived from the same source. This is the want of continuity in most of the *canzos*. Few of these show a necessary organic growth. In most cases stanzas might be added or taken away without detracting from or increasing the general merit of the poem. The reason is the wonderful elaborateness and symmetry of the single stanzas, which make them appear in the light of independent and compact units, the stringing together of which may delight the hearer for a time, but can never produce the impression of an organic whole. I could cite modern instances in which the same cause has had exactly the same effect.

But such deficiencies, apparent as they are in a greater or less degree in every troubadour, ought not to blind us to the high merits of Provençal poetry, its refinement, its tenderness of feeling, its unrivalled perfection of form. Our admiration of these qualities increases when we think of the soil in which this remarkable growth took place. The troubadours were the first harbingers of reviving literary culture after the storms which wrecked the Western Empire. They had no models to fall back upon; for the poets of antiquity were more or less above their ken, and the simple creations of the popular mind beneath their attention. They had even to create their language from a mixture of

provincial *patois*. If ever poetry has sprung from the spontaneous impulse of man, it is in this instance. And, what is more, it was at a time when everywhere else intellectual darkness and barrenness covered the land. At the time when Guillem of Poitiers wrote his masterpieces of lyrical refinement, the amalgamation of the native with the foreign idiom had only just begun in England; in Northern France the stage of the primitive epic was hardly reached, and a century was to pass before the seed sown by the troubadours was to bring forth fruit in Germany; Italy yielding to the same influence at a still later period. But the Provençal love-song had reached its autumn before these subsequent developments entered into existence. For a long time it stood alone, an exotic plant of unknown origin, but of rich and peculiar growth, in the wilderness of the early middle ages.

Of the metrical structure of the love-song I shall say little in this place. The varieties and niceties of its rhymes and stanzas the reader will find fully discussed in the technical chapters. It may be mentioned here that some difference seems to have existed between two kinds of the love-song, the *vers* and the *canzo*; but what the exact nature of the difference was it is impossible to say. The troubadours themselves had not a very clear notion of it. The *Leys d'amors* is even more than usually rambling and vague in its definition, and all the characteristics it mentions of the *vers* belong in equal measure to the *canzo*. Aimeric de Pegulhan,

one of the later troubadours, candidly confesses that to him the distinction between the terms has lost its significance. 'Frequently,' he says, 'I am asked at court why I do not write a *vers*. Therefore I leave it to those who care, to decide whether this song be a *vers* or a *canzo*; and to those who inquire I answer that I do not find any difference between *vers* and *canzo* beyond the name.' It further appears from his song, that, according to rule or prejudice, the *canzo* generally had feminine rhymes and short lively musical accompaniments, while the more primitive *vers* affected monosyllabic endings and long-drawn melodies. But he justly infers that this rule is not observed by the troubadours to any prevailing extent, and this fact deprives the theoretical subtleties of ancient and modern grammarians of their substantial basis.

And here my remarks on the *canzo* and on the general aspects of Provençal literature must end. Of the incompleteness of the sketch in more than one respect I am fully conscious. But I hope that the reader may be able to form some adequate view of the intellectual and moral conditions of which the poetry of the troubadours is the embodiment. To blur this outline with further detail would be contrary to the purpose of this book, which, I repeat it, is not a scientific treatise aiming at exhaustiveness, but rather a first attempt to attract the English reader towards a subject which deserves so much and has had so little of his attention. The safest, perhaps

the only, method of gaining this end is the biographical. In the biographies of some of the principal troubadours I therefore have embodied what further information of the life and work of these poets I desired to give on the present occasion. Guillem de Cabestanh will be the representative of the love-song proper. Peire Vidal combines the satiric and the lyrical gifts. Bertran de Born represents the warlike or political *sirventes*; the Monk of Montaudon is the master of personal and literary satire, while Peire Cardinal's pessimism and severe morality loom in cloudy distance above the gay throng. The crusade against the Albigeois heretics, with its baneful consequences for Provençal literature, is treated in continuous chapters, and a separate niche of fame is gallantly assigned to the lady troubadours. Other questions connected with the subject are incidentally treated.

*PART II.*

# BIOGRAPHICAL



## CHAPTER XV.

### GUILLEM DE CABESTANH.

PETRARCH, in the fourth chapter of his 'Trionfo d'Amore,' in speaking of the love-poets of various nations, mentions the name of 'William, who, by his song, shortened the flower of his days.'

Quel Guglielmo,
Che per cantar ha'l fior dei suoi dì scemo!

This William is Guillem de Cabestanh the troubadour, and it is his story that I propose to tell the reader, following as closely as possible the quaint old biography contained in a Provençal manuscript of the Laurentian Library in Florence.

'Sir Raimon of Rossilho,' the old manuscript begins, 'was a mighty baron, as you are well aware, and had for his wife the Lady Margarida, the most beautiful lady, as you know, of that time, and the most prized for all that is praiseworthy, and noble, and courteous. It so happened that Guillem de Cabestanh, the son of a poor knight of Castle Cabestanh, came to the court of Sir Raimon de Rossilho, offering to remain with him as his servant (*vaslez de sa cort*). Sir Raimon, who found him to be of fair and good countenance, bade him welcome,

and Guillem remained with him, and so gentle was his demeanour, that young and old loved him well. And so much did he advance in favour that Sir Raimon wished him to be page to Lady Margarida his wife ; and so it was done.

'But as it frequently befalls with love, it now befell that Love was bent on besieging the Lady Margarida with his siege, and he kindled her thoughts with fire. So much was she pleased with Guillem's demeanour, and his speech, and his countenance, that one day she could not withhold herself from saying, "Tell me, Guillem, if a lady were to show you semblance of love, would you dare to love her?" Guillem, who understood her meaning, answered frankly, "Certainly, lady, if I knew that the semblance were true." "By St. John," replied the lady, "a good and noble answer ; but now I will test thee, if thou canst know and distinguish truth from falsehood." When Guillem heard these words, he replied, "May it be as it pleases you."'

The biographer goes on to describe how the thoughts thus enjoined upon Guillem by the lady rouse his soul from amorous reflection to desire; 'and henceforth he became a servant to Love, and began to invent stanzas graceful and gay, and tunes and canzos, and his songs found favour with all, but most with her for whom he sang.' Thus, once again, the flame of poetry was awakened by the fire of passion. 'But Love,' the manuscript continues, 'who rewards the labours of his servants when it pleases him, now thought of showing himself grateful. He

assails the thoughts of the lady with love and desire; night and day she cannot leave off thinking of the poet's valour and beauty.'

'One day the lady took Guillem aside, and spoke to him this wise: "Guillem, tell me, hast thou yet found out of my semblance if it is true or false?"[1] Guillem answered, "Lady, so God help me, from the hour I entered your service, no thought has entered my mind but that you are the best lady ever born, and the most truthful in word and appearance; this I believe, and shall believe all my life."'

Thus the fateful knot of passion is tied between these two; and fate is rapid in its approach. 'For soon,' the story continues, 'the tell-tales, whom God hates, began to talk of their love, and to guess by Guillem's songs that he was of one mind with Lady Margarida. These went on talking high and low, till at last it came to the ear of Sir Raimon. He was ill pleased and hot with rage through having lost the friend he loved so well, and more because of the shame of his spouse.'

We expect to see the great baron crushing his faithless retainer in the first storm of indignation. But such is not his character. He is resolved to smite, but not till the guilty are convicted by their own words. With great discretion he refrains from

[1] The characteristic change between plural and singular in the lady's address to Guillem adds greatly to the impressiveness of the original. Here, for instance, she says, 'Eram digaz (Tell *you* me), t'es tu anquera (hast *thou* found out),' etc.

questioning his wife, or from taking any further steps till he has seen Guillem without witnesses. One day when the poet is gone to hunt with the sparrow-hawk, Raimon follows him, secretly armed, but unaccompanied. He meets him in a lonely place, and the scene which passes between them is exceedingly characteristic of the men and of the time in which they lived. Guillem, on seeing the baron approach, at once recognises the danger of his situation. But he is too much of a courtier to show any embarrassment.

At first their conversation runs on indifferent matters, courteous inquiries and answers as to Guillem's sport and the like. But presently Raimon's self-control begins to desert him. 'Let us leave off this talk now,' he begins abruptly, 'and answer me truthfully, by the faith you owe me, all that I am going to ask you.'

After some natural hesitation, Guillem submits to this comprehensive demand.

'Tell me, then,' asks Raimon, solemnly, 'as you love God and your faith, have you a lady for whom you sing, and to whom you are bound in love?'

'And how could I sing,' William answers, 'if Love did not bind me? Know, noble sir, that he has me wholly in his power.'

Raimon answered, 'I willingly believe that without love you could not sing so well; but now I must know who is your lady?'

But to this Guillem demurs. Hitherto he has answered the questions of his master, as in duty

bound; but here a higher duty intervenes, that of discretion in the service of love. In his excuse he quotes some lines of his brother poet Bernard de Ventadorn, to the effect that it is 'a foolish and childish thing to reveal your love to a friend who can be of no service to you.'

Raimon accepts the plea, but he meets the move with one of equal skill.

'Quite true,' he says; 'but I pledge my word that I will be of service to you, as far as lies in my power.'

Guillem, thus brought to bay, sees only one way to save himself from immediate destruction.

'Know then,' he exclaims, 'that I love the sister of the Lady Margarida your wife, and I believe that she returns my passion; now you know all, and I pray you to assist me, or at least not to injure me.'

To this Raimon assents very readily, and to prove his zealous friendship, he proposes an immediate visit to the lady herself, whose husband's castle (for she also, as a matter of course, is married) happens to be in the immediate neighbourhood. The feelings of Guillem, as the two ride along, may be imagined.

Before we follow them to the castle, let us for a moment look back on the scene we have just witnessed. Time: the latter half of the twelfth century; place: a lonely wood in the South of France; actors: two men moved against each other by jealousy, fear, revenge, the consciousness of wrong inflicted and received—the strongest emotions,

in short, of which the human heart is capable. Yet note the calmness and refined courtesy of their manner, the neatness of repartee in a conversation where life and honour are at stake. Guillem, it must be remembered, is at the mercy of his antagonist. Instead of meeting him man to man, Raimon might have thrown his vassal into a dungeon, or wrung his secret from him on the rack. No one would have dared to interfere with the mighty baron, or to breathe suspicion on his wife's honour. I fear, indeed, that an ordinary retainer would not have met with such considerate treatment at Raimon's hands. But Guillem was a poet of reputation, who could not be dealt with in a summary manner. Hence the terms of equality which Raimon grants him as a matter of course; hence even the offer of assistance in his love affairs. For troubadours were privileged persons. Every one knew that the ladies worshipped by them, under various *senhals*, or pseudonyms, were frequently the wives of the greatest nobles of the land. Raimon himself is quite willing to acknowledge this poetic licence, as long as his own wife is not concerned. It, at any rate, speaks well for the genuine quality of the Provençal love-song, to see how both Guillem and his patron treat its origin from anything but real passion as a total impossibility. But whatever the reader may think of the morality of the principles alluded to, he must admit that they imply a refinement of manner and sentiment, somewhat at variance with the popular notion of the semi-barbaric state of early

mediæval culture. But still stranger events are in store for us.

On their arrival at Castle Liet, Raimon and the poet are hospitably received by the noble Lord Robert de Tarascon and his wife, the Lady Agnes, sister of Lady Margarida. Raimon, whose friendly offers to Guillem the reader no doubt fully appreciates, takes an early opportunity of cross-questioning his sister-in-law on the delicate subject of her lover, without, however, mentioning a name. But the lady is equal to the occasion. She has seen by Guillem's expression, that some mischief must be brewing, and, knowing of her sister's attachment, she at once sides against the jealous husband. She admits having a lover, and, when asked as to his identity, names Guillem without a moment of hesitation, and much to the relief of Raimon. Her husband, when told of the intrigue, fully approves the lady's conduct, and both combine, in various ways, to further convince Raimon of a guilty intimacy between Guillem and the lady of Tarascon. So well do they succeed, that on his return home Raimon goes at once to tell his wife of his discovery; much to the dismay of that lady, as the reader need not be told. Guillem is summoned before his indignant mistress, and denies his guilt; his innocence being confirmed by the statement of the lady of Tarascon. Margarida is satisfied, but nevertheless bids Guillem declare in a song that to none but her is his love devoted. In answer to this summons Guillem writes the celebrated canzo, 'Li dous cossire qu'em don'

amors soven' (The sweet longing that love often gives to me); one of the most beautiful and most impassioned lyrics ever penned, and, alas! his last.[1] For Raimon, when he hears the song, at once fathoms its meaning. His fury now is boundless, but once more he curbs it, to poison the sting of his revenge. He again meets Guillem in a lonely place, slays him, severs the head from the body, tears out the heart, and with these dreadful trophies secretly returns to the castle. The heart he has roasted,[2] and at dinner asks his wife to partake of it. After she has eaten he discloses the terrible secret and simultaneously produces the gory head of her lover, asking her how she liked the flavour of the meat. The lady's answer is noble and of tragic simplicity. 'It was so good and savoury,' she says, 'that never other meat or drink shall take from my mouth the sweetness which the heart of Guillem has left there.' The exasperated husband then rushes at her with his drawn sword, and she, flying from him, throws herself from a balcony, and dies.

Thus the marriage law is vindicated, and M. Alexandre Dumas' sentence of *tue-la* carried out in a manner with which even that severe moralist could not but be satisfied. But Guillem's contemporaries had not yet attained to this pitch of virtue. The news of the deed spread rapidly, and was received everywhere with grief and indignation; 'and all the friends

[1] See the interlinear version of it; Index, ii.

[2] Another biographer adds with ghastly accuracy, '*a pebrada*,' with pepper—'devilled,' as we should say.

of Guillem and the lady, and all the courteous knights of the neighbourhood, and all those who were lovers, united to make war against Raimon.' King Alfonso, of Aragon, himself invaded Raimon's dominions, took from him his castles and lands, and kept him prisoner till death. All his possessions were divided amongst the relations of Guillem and of the lady—a somewhat unusual exercise of feudal jurisdiction, it would seem. The same king had the two lovers buried in one tomb, and erected a monument over them, just outside the door of the Church of Perpignan. 'And there was a time,' the biographer adds, 'when all the knights of Rossilho, and of Serdonha, of Confolen, Riuples, Peiralaide, and Narbones, kept the day of their death every year; and all the fond lovers and all the fond lady-loves prayed for their souls.'

This is the story as rendered in the manuscript of the Laurentiana; and a beautiful story it is, told with exquisite skill, and with an artistic grouping of the psychological and pathetic elements for which many modern novelists might envy the obscure Provençal scribe. Boccaccio's treatment of the same incidents, with changed names, in the thirty-ninth *novella* of the 'Decameron,' is greatly inferior to the present version. But this very finish of detail excites suspicions as to the historic truth of the extraordinary events so plausibly narrated. Further research into the matter confirms this suspicion. I have traced no less than seven different versions of Guillem's life in the Provençal language preserved

amongst the MS. collections of the libraries of Rome, Florence, and Paris. All these purport to be authentic biographies of the poet, and all agree in the main incidents of the story, differing, however, in details, and even in the names of the localities and persons concerned. The lady, for instance, is in some versions called Sermonda or Sorismonda, instead of Margarida. Other discrepancies and arbitrary additions tend to show that invention has been busy to embellish the tragic fate of a celebrated poet; and it has not been an easy task to divest the kernel of historic truth from later fictitious accumulations. I cannot enter here into tedious details, and must ask the reader to accept in good faith the results of what I may, without presumption, call a careful and patient investigation.

The historic identity of Guillem de Cabestanh, a celebrated poet of the fourteenth century, is sufficiently proved, and there is no intrinsic or external reason to doubt that he was enamoured of a married lady, and killed by her jealous husband. It is also by no means unlikely that the discovery was brought about by an unguarded expression in one of the poet's songs, although this circumstance is not mentioned in the oldest and simplest version. The chronologically second version, on the contrary, lays great stress on this interesting fact, naming the fatal song—none other than the beautiful and popular canzo, 'Li dous cossire,' already referred to. Here, then, we discover the clue to the numerous romantic additions of the later versions, which could be made with the

greater impunity, as the real circumstances of the story began to fade from the memory of men. For most of these additions are evidently invented with a view to connecting this particular song with the tragic fate of the poet—an idea by no means wanting in poetic beauty, although not borne out by the dry facts of history. The ingenious way in which this connection is attempted is particularly shown in one of the manuscripts where the actual passage of the song from which Raimon is said to have derived his knowledge is quoted. The words run:

> Tot qan faz per temensa
> Devez en bona fei,
> Prendre neis qan nous vei.

In English, 'All I am compelled to do by fear, you must accept in good faith, even if I do not see you.' At first sight the suggestion seems plausible. The song, as we know, was written to account for Guillem's apparent faithlessness, and to the jealous suspicion of the husband the allusion might seem plain enough. But it must be borne in mind that Raimon was not supposed to know to whom Guillem's songs were addressed. After he had once found out that the poet spoke of his wife and to his wife in such a manner as is done in the *canzo* in question, the further discovery of any particularly suggestive passage was quite unnecessary. The idea of connecting a song treating of the ordinary incidents of a love-affair with the death of the poet is evidently an afterthought, although by no means an inappropriate one. The author of the version followed by me in

the above shows the highest degree of inventive boldness by adding entirely new incidents (*e.g.*, the visit to Castle Liet), and rendering *verbatim* long conversations, of which no cognisance could possibly have been obtained.

Regarding the most striking incident, that of the lover's heart being eaten by the lady, it is true that all the versions contain it, but other circumstances tend to throw grave doubts on its historic reality. For the same fact is told with some modifications of the Châtelain de Coucy, a celebrated poet of Northern France, no less historical than Guillem himself, and nearly his contemporary. The independent recurrence in the course of a few years of the same extraordinary fact is intrinsically much more unlikely than the supposition that the story of the eaten heart was, in some form or other, popular at the time, and therefore connected with the life of one of their celebrated poets by both northern and southern Frenchmen. Students of the 'History of Fiction' are aware that the local and individual application of a popular story to a popular hero is a most common process, and readers of Dunlop's excellent work of that name may remember that the incident of the eaten heart is by no means confined to the age or country of Guillem de Cabestanh. I should indeed not feel surprised if one of our comparative mythologists were to prove that the vulture gnawing the head or liver of the fettered Prometheus is at the bottom of it all.

But whatever may be the historical value of the

story related in the above, it throws a striking and abundant light on the manners and feelings of mediæval Provence. Here we see the idea of the unlimited power of love carried to its extreme consequences. Margarida, a noble lady, adorned, as is expressly stated, with all virtues and accomplishments, does not hesitate at inviting the courtship of her inferior in rank in the most unmistakable manner. But the narrator, and evidently his public with him, think that everything is sufficiently accounted for by an allusion to the unconquerable impulse of love.

And in the service of this love all means of defence, fair or foul, are thought permissible. Guillem betrays his kind master and benefactor, and afterwards, in order to save himself, calmly exposes the honour of a third person by an audacious falsehood. Raimon himself is quite willing to tolerate, or even to further, the poet's intrigue with his wife's sister; and the manner in which the lord and lady of Tarascon pay him back in his own coin displays the equally loose principles of those distinguished persons. The immediate discovery of the whole state of affairs on the part of the lady, moreover, betrays an acuteness of vision explainable only from personal experience of similar predicaments. When at last the long-abused husband discovers the intrigue, and takes cruel revenge, nobody seems to consider that he has been sinned against no less than sinning, and all true knights and lovers, the King of Aragon amongst them, hasten to punish the

vile murderer, while the lovers are revered as saints and martyrs. Much as we may condemn the brutality of the husband's revenge, or wish to excuse the fatal effects of irresistible passion, justice compels us to consider that the breach of the marriage vow was in this case aggravated by that of confidence, friendship, and fealty. But justice to a husband, as we know, was a thing unheard of in the code of Provençal gallantry—the very name was odious, and all but synonymous with criminal, or at least dupe. I do not, indeed, recollect a single instance amongst the numerous love-stories told in connection with the troubadours in which the object of passion was not a married lady; a strange point of affinity with the modern French novel to which I call the attention of those interested in national psychology. The final wedding-bells of English novels would be vainly listened for in Provençal fiction.

If this frivolous conception of sacred ties repels our æsthetical and moral feelings, we cannot, on the other hand, refuse our sympathy to a passion so pure and so intense as that reflected in the *canzos* of Guillem de Cabestanh. Only seven of his poems have been preserved to us, but these rank amongst the highest achievements of Provençal literature. In the whole range of international song I know of no sweeter lyric than Guillem's 'Lo jorn qu'eus vi domna premieramen,' or that other *canzo*, which legend has connected with his death. The latter is also remarkable for its display of highest technical finish, while the remainder of Guillem's songs are

comparatively simple in structure, and contain few of those marvellous *tours de force* of rhyme and metre which most troubadours delight in.

Such artificialities of manner would, indeed, be ill adapted to the extreme simplicity of his theme, which is nothing but the deepest passion for one beloved object. There is in his poems no fickleness, no variation of mood, and if his literary remains were voluminous, the uniformity of his passion would pall upon us. As it is, this very monotony adds to the intensity of our impression. Guillem is a patient lover, a male type of the nut-brown maid. Everything he will suffer for his lady and from her; nay, he derives pleasure from his sufferings, as they have been inflicted upon him in the service of love, in *her* service. At first sight he has become her bondsman, she has bewitched him with a smile, taken his sense and his thought with a word of her mouth. Sometimes he fancies that he must have loved her before seeing her, and delights in the delusion of having been destined by God to serve her. For her, therefore, he will live, and his songs shall tell the world of her worth and of his passion.

This is the essence of Guillem's songs. One of them only need be quoted here. It shows him in the attitude of a devoted lover. He had no other.

CANZO.

Lo jorn, qeus vi domna, premieramen,
Qant a vos plac qeus mi laissez vezer,
Parti mon cor tot d'autre pensamen,
E foron ferm en vos tut mei voler;

Q'aissim pausez, domna el cor l'enveja ;
Ab un douz ris et ab un simpl'esgar,
Mi e qant es mi fezez oblidar.

Qel granz beutaz el solaz d'avinen
Eil cortes dit eil amoros plazer
Qem saubez far, m'embleron si mon sen,
Q'anc pois hora domna nol poc aver ;
A vos l'autrei, cui mos fis cors merceja ;
Per enantir vostre prez et onrar
A vos mi ren, q'om miels non pot amar.

E car vos am domna, tan finamen,
Qe d'autr'amar nom don' amors poder ;
Mas aizem da q'ab autras cortei gen,
Don cug de mi la greu dolor mover ;
Pois quant cossir de vos cui jois sopleja,
Tot' autr'amor oblit e desampar,
Ab vos remanh cui tenc al cor plus car.

E membre vos, sius plaz, del bon coven
Qe mi fezez al departir saber,
Don aic mon cor adonc guai e jauzen
Pel bon respeit en qem mandez tener ;
Mout n'aic gran joi, s'era lo mals sim greja ;
Et aurai lo, qan vos plaira encar,
Bona domna, q'eu sui en l'esperar.

E ges mals trags no men fai espaven,
Sol q'eu en cuit en ma vida aver
De vos domna qalaqom jauzimen ;
Anz li mal trag mi son joi e plazer
Sol per aiso, car sai q'amors autreja,
Qe fis amans deu granz torz perdonar
E gen soffrir mals trags per gazanhs far.

Aissi er ja domna l'ora q'eu veja,
Qe per merce mi volhaz tan onrar,
Qe sol amic me denhez appellar.

*Translation.*

The day when first I saw you, lady sweet,
When first your beauty deigned on me to shine,
I laid my heart's devotion at your feet;
No other wish, no other thought were mine.

For in my soul you wakened soft desire ;
In your sweet smile and in your eyes I found
More than myself and all the world around.

Your tender speech, so amorous, so kind,
The solace of your words, your beauty's spell
Once and for ever have my heart entwined,
No longer in my bosom it will dwell.
Your worth to cherish it shall never tire.
Oh ! then, your gentle grace let me implore ;
My all I gave you, I can give no more.

So wholly, lady, is my heart your own
That love will not allow another's love.
Oft when to gentle ladies I have flown,
Somewhat the burden of my pain to move,
The thought of you, the fountain of my bliss,
Has aye dispelled all other vain desires ;
To you with tenfold love my heart retires.

Do not forget, I pray, the hopeful word
You granted me when last I saw your face ;
My heart leaped up with pleasure when I heard
The joyful message vouchsafed by your grace.
In present grief my comfort still is this :
That when your heart to mercy is inclined
My ardent wish may yet fulfilment find.

Pride and unkindness have for me no sting,
As long as I may hope that in this life
One day from you may kindest message bring.
Grief turns to joy and pleasure springs from strife ;
For well I know that Love has willed it so
That lovers should forgive the deadliest sin,
By deepest sorrow highest bliss to win.

The hour will come, O lady, well I know,
When from your yielding mercy I may claim
The one word 'friend.' I ask no other name.

Several biographical facts may be gleaned from this song. First of all we meet with an allusion to the poet's intercourse with other 'gentle ladies,' which shows a striking likeness to the lines previously

quoted from Guillem's most celebrated *canzo*. Margarida, it might be inferred, was not altogether free from a feeling of jealousy towards not one but several ladies, and both passages are evidently written by Guillem with a view to appeasing this ill-founded suspicion; a circumstance which throws still graver doubt on the fanciful connection of the first-mentioned lines with the incident at Castle Liet. Whether the temporary banishment alluded to in the present *canzo* has anything to do with these lovers' quarrels remains undecided. But the poet's complaints of cruelty tend to prove that the lady did not yield with the astonishing readiness implied by the biographer. Guillem, it appears, had to undergo a severe probation before the fatal gift of love was vouchsafed to him, and at the stage marked by the *canzo* the name of 'friend' is the highest boon to which he ventures to aspire. Well for him if that stage had never been passed.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## PEIRE VIDAL.

PEIRE VIDAL is one of the most versatile and many-sided amongst the troubadours. His character is a psychological riddle. High gifts and wildest eccentricities are strangely mixed up in it. But the riddle cannot be read from a purely individual point of view. Peire Vidal is also a type. His adventures and poems show as in a kaleidoscope the romantic and often exaggerated and whimsical ideas which animated his age and country.

'Peire Vidal'—the old biography begins—'was born in Toulouse, the son of a furrier; he sang better than any other poet in the world, and was one of the most foolish men who ever lived, for he believed everything to be just as it pleased him and as he would have it.' That he grew to his greatness out of the meanest circumstances was a lot which he shared with some of the most famous of his brethren, such as Marcabrun and Folquet of Marseilles, and it accounts to a certain extent for many of his follies and illusions. The time of his birth it is impossible to state accurately; it appears, however, from several remarks in his poems, that it must have

been somewhere about the middle of the twelfth century. In his youth he seems to have been very poor; thus in one of his earlier *canzos* he addresses a lady in the following simple and frank words: 'I have no castle with walls, and my land is not worth a pair of gloves, but there never was nor will be a more faithful lover than I am.' When his genius had made him the favourite and companion of kings and nobles, he did not lack wealth. In his songs we never find a request for assistance from his protectors, such as often occurs in the stanzas of other troubadours, and he was even in a position to keep many servants and followers. He soon tired of a quiet life, and left home to find fortune and renown. First he went to Spain, where he was kindly received at the court of Alfonso II., King of Aragon, one of the most liberal protectors of the troubadours; but his restlessness could not endure a long sojourn in the same place. He went to Italy, and for many years was travelling about between that country, Spain, and the South of France, always well received by nobles and princes, and always in love with beautiful women. It would be impossible to give the names of the different objects of his admiration. The general character of these futile attachments was that the poet believed himself quite irresistible, and supposed no interval to exist between his seeing and conquering. 'Often,' he says, 'I receive messages with golden rings and black and white ribbons. Hundreds of ladies would fain keep me with them if they could.' In another *canzo* he boasts that all

husbands are afraid of him more than of fire and sword. In point of fact, however, the ladies he admired did not by any means justify these illusions, and his old biographer goes so far as to say that they all deceived him 'totas l'engannavan.' The best proof of the harmlessness of the poet's love affairs seems to be that the husbands concerned were more amused than offended by his homage to their wives. One of them, however, took the matter less easily. When Peire Vidal boasted in his usual way of having received many favours from his wife, he took his revenge by imprisoning the poet and piercing his tongue through. This anecdote of the old manuscript is confirmed by different allusions to the fact in the poems of other troubadours. The Monk of Montaudon, who mercilessly ridicules Peire Vidal's follies, says that he 'stands in need of a silver tongue.'

The first strong and genuine attachment the poet seems to have formed was for the Viscountess Azalais, of the family of Roca Martina, wife of Barral de Baux, Viscount of Marseilles. She was praised for her beauty and kindness by many of the greatest troubadours, and it was for her that Folquet of Marseilles, the amorous poet and afterwards ascetic bishop, sang his tenderest *canzos*. Peire Vidal in his poems always calls her Vierna, one of the nicknames by which the troubadours (in the same way as the antique poets their Lesbias and Lalages) addressed for discretion's sake the fair objects of their admiration. Peire Vidal's love in this case, unlike his former transient passions, was

of long duration. Even the severest treatment and a long banishment from the lady's presence, could not extinguish his affection. Far from her he was unhappy, and sent her his songs as messengers of love and devotion. At first she was well pleased with the homage of the celebrated poet who spread the renown of her beauty over all the country. Moreover, Barral her husband was on very friendly terms with Peire, and sometimes even had to compose the little differences which soon arose between the eccentric troubadour and his beloved one. The poet complained bitterly of her cruelty and ingratitude towards him who had always been faithful to her, but this grief of unanswered love was favourable to his poetic genius. To this period belong his most beautiful *canzos*, full of touching pathos and marked by great artistic perfection. 'I was rich and happy,' he says in one of these songs, 'until my lady turned my joy to grief, for she behaves to me like a cruel and pitiless warrior. And she is wrong in doing so, for I never gave her occasion to complain of me, and have always been her most faithful admirer. But this very faithfulness she will never forgive me. I am like a bird which follows the hunter's pipe, although it be to its certain death. So I expose my heart willingly to the thousands of arrows which she throws at me with her beautiful eyes.' But presently he is afraid to offend her even by these modest complaints. In the *tornada* he says, 'O lady Vierna, I will not complain of you, but I think I deserve a little more recompense for all my waiting and hoping.' Not-

withstanding all these entreaties the lady had no pity for her unhappy lover. The slight favours she granted him were overbalanced by outbreaks of bad temper, and worst of all she began to find something ridiculous in the rather eccentric proofs of Peire's unchanged devotion. At last an inconsiderate outbreak of his passion resulted in his being for a long time banished from her presence. One day, early in the morning, Count Barral had risen, and Azalais remained alone in her room. Of this occasion the enamoured troubadour availed himself to go there in secret. He knelt down before her couch and kissed the lips of his slumbering love. At first she believed him to be her husband, and smiled kindly, but when she fully awoke and saw it was the 'fool' Peire Vidal who had taken this liberty, she grew furious, and began to weep and to raise a great clamour. Her attendants rushed into the room, and the importunate intruder had a narrow escape of being severely punished on the spot. The lady immediately sent for her husband, and begged him to avenge Peire's impertinence; but Count Barral, in accordance with the opinion of his time, did not consider the offence an unpardonable one, and reproved the lady for having made so much of a fool's oddities. He did not, however, succeed in softening her wrath; she made the story known all over the country, and uttered such terrible threats that the poet began to fear for his safety, and preferred to wait abroad for a change in his favour. He went to Genoa, and soon afterwards, according to some manuscripts, followed King Richard on his crusade

to the Holy Land. Though this latter assertion is, for chronological reasons, not very probable, yet Peire's voyage to Palestine cannot be doubted. Here he composed the little song of love and home-sickness which I have attempted to translate, following the original closely, but the tender grace and melodious charm of which it would be impossible to reproduce in our Northern idiom :

CANZO.

Ab l'alen tir vas me l'aire
Qu'eu sen venir de Proensa;
Tot quant es de lai m'agensa,
Si que, quan n'aug ben retraire,
Eu m'o escout en rizen ;
En deman per un mot cen :
T'an m'es bel quan n'aug ben dire.

Qu'om no sap tan dous repaire
Cum de Rozer tro qu'a Vensa,
Si cum clau mars e Durensa,
Ni on tan fis jois s'esclaire.
Per qu'entre la franca gen
Ai laissat mon cor jauzen
Ab leis que fals iratz rire.

Qu'om no pot lo jorn maltraire
Qu'aja de leis sovinensa,
Qu'en leis nais jois e comensa.
E qui qu'en sia lauzaire,
De ben qu'en diga noi men,
Quel melher es ses conten
El genser qu'el mon se mire.

E s'eu sai ren dir ni faire,
Ilh n'ajal grat, que sciensa
M'a donat e conoissensa,
Per qu'eu sui gais e chantaire.
E tot quan fauc d'avinen
Ai del seu bel cors plazen,
Neis quan de bon cor consire.

*Translation.*

With my breath I drink the air
That Provence my country sends me,
For a message ever lends me
Joy, from her most dear and fair.
When they praise her I rejoice,
Ask for more with eager voice,
Listen, listen night and morrow.

For no country 'neath the sun
Beats mine from Rozer to Vensa,
From the sea to the Durensa:
Nowhere equal joy is won.
With my friends, when I did part,
And with her I left my heart
Who dispelled my deepest sorrow.

Nothing harms me all the day
While her sweet eyes stand before me,
And her lips that rapture bore me.
If I praise her, no one may
Call my rapturous word a lie,
For the whole world can descry
Nothing wrought in sweeter fashion.

All the good I do or say
Only to her grace is owing,
For she made me wise and knowing,
For she made me true and gay.
If in glory I abound,
To her praise it must redound
Who inspires my song with passion.

By such repeated proofs of the poet's unchangeable love the heart of Azalais was at last touched. Besides, fool as he was, Peire was undoubtedly one of the most renowned troubadours, and the proudest beauty could not be indifferent to the celebration of her charms in *canzos* as popular as they were exquisite. Barral importuned his wife till she promised

the poet forgiveness of all past offences, and immediately sent the happy message to Peire. Some of the manuscripts say that Azalais wrote him a letter in which she promised him all he had been wishing for so long. Peire Vidal returned to France, and Barral on hearing of his arrival rode out to meet him, and guided him to Marseilles. Azalais received him gracefully, and granted him the kiss he had once taken. All was forgiven and forgotten, and the troubadour commemorated the happy reconciliation by a song radiant with joy and hope. This state of pure happiness, however, was not destined to be of long duration. The lady seems to have been disinclined to fulfil her promises; the complaints in Peire's *canzos* of her cruelty and falseness begin anew, and at last he very likely grew tired of his unrewarded pains. Certain it is that he did not stay very long at Marseilles, for he does not make the slightest mention of Barral's death, which happened soon after, in 1192. This silence would have been impossible if he had been living at the time at his old friend and protector's court.

While he was yet the professed admirer of Azalais, the poet had admired more or less fervently several other ladies, from one of whom he now seems to have sought consolation. This was Loba de Peinautier, who lived in Carcassonne. Her name Loba (she-wolf) became the motive of one of Peire Vidal's most fantastic exploits; he gave himself the designation of a wolf, and adopted the animal as a badge. Once he put on a wolf's skin, and called

upon the shepherds to hunt him with their dogs. They readily accepted the offer, and treated him so badly that he was brought more dead than alive to the house of his beloved. Here, in addition to his wounds, he had to suffer the pitiless jests of the lady; who was not at all pleased by this kind of admiration. But in this case also the husband was more merciful, and regarded the aberrations of the great troubadour with indulgence. He took the greatest possible care of him, and had him tended by the best physicians. It would be difficult to believe a consummate poet had really been guilty of such absurdities, if he did not bear witness against himself. 'I do not mind,' he says in one of his poems, 'if they call me a wolf, and if the peasants hunt me as such I do not consider it a disgrace.' The foolishness of the man, however, did not impair the genius of the poet, and some of his *canzos* addressed to Loba are amongst the finest productions of Provençal literature. Whilst he was engaged in these and other love affairs the poet was also married, which of course did not interfere with his attachments of this kind more than the same circumstance did with Dante's spiritual love for Beatrice Portinari. I mention the circumstance only because it throws fresh light on Peire's wonderful capacity for illusion. On his voyage to the Holy Land, he became acquainted in Cyprus with a Greek lady, whom he married and brought home with him. Soon afterwards he was made to believe that his wife was the niece of the Greek emperor, and had as such a claim to the

imperial crown. This idea was exactly to his taste, and he adapted himself to it without any difficulty. He had on a previous occasion, if we are to believe the satirical Monk of Montaudon, conferred knighthood on himself; now he assumed with equal facility the arms of the Emperor of Greece. He began collecting money, wherever he could find it, for an expedition to realise his claims. Meanwhile, he called himself and his wife by the title of 'Imperial Majesty,' and duly provided himself with a throne. It is needless to say that his schemes came to nothing; the only consequence was to expose him to greater ridicule than before. His brethren in poetry were not slow to avail themselves of this opportunity of lowering a renowned troubadour in general estimation, and to do him as much harm as they could. One bitter and contemptuous *sirventes* will give an example of the amiable feelings with which rivals in art regarded each other. Its author is the Italian Marquis Lanza, and it runs thus: 'We have an emperor without sense or reason or consciousness; a worse drunkard never sat on a throne; no greater coward wore shield and lance, no greater scoundrel made verses and *canzos*. I wish a sword would split his head, and an iron dart go right through his body; his eyes ought to be torn out of his head with hooks. Then we will give him some wine, and put on his head an old scarlet hat, and for a lance he may have an old stick. So he may safely wander from here to France.' Peire Vidal answered this friendly address with equal warmth. 'Marquis Lanza,' he says,

'poverty and ignorance have spoilt your manners. You are like a blind beggar in the street, who has lost all shame or decency.'

It would hardly have been expected that, with all this trouble about his loves and his empire, the poet could have had time left to take part in the real political and religious struggles of his age. But his versatile genius was as much interested in public affairs as in his own private concerns. As one of the first poets of his time he was in continual intercourse with princes and nobles, and in consequence had ample means of knowing the politics of his protectors, and frequent occasion to use his poetical gift on their behalf. Among his most constant friends was King Alfonso II. of Aragon, at whose court the chief poets of the time gathered, and found shelter from poverty and contempt. The King himself practised the art of poetry; and we possess a *canzo* by him which, if not of the first excellence, shows at least that he did not shrink from competing for the prize in the 'Gaia Sciensa.' According to his liberality so was the praise awarded to him in the songs of the most renowned troubadours. Bertran de Born, indeed, accuses him of treason and cowardice, but the passionate character of that poet made him unscrupulous in his attacks on political and personal enemies. Peter II., Alfonso's son, inherited his father's disposition towards the troubadours, and it was a great loss to them when he fell in the battle of Muret (1213) against the Crusaders. Peire Vidal was among the greatest

favourites of both father and son. Alfonso once had suits of armour of the same kind made for himself and the poet, a striking mark of friendship in so great a prince. The poet showed his thankfulness by the only return he had to offer, his songs. Several of his *canzos* are dedicated to Alfonso, whose side he took in all the King's wars and feuds. The very first *sirventes* we have of Peire's refers to the war between Alfonso and Count Raimon of Toulouse, and, notwithstanding the poet having been born in that city, it is an ardent war-song in favour of the intruder. The author, however, could not on this occasion withstand his natural inclination towards self-praise, and by his immoderate boasting lessened the effect of his song. 'If I only had a good horse,' he says, 'I should trample on all my enemies, for even as it is, when they hear my name, they are afraid of me more than the quail of the sparrow-hawk, because I am so strong and wild and ferocious; when I have put on my double white armour, and girt my sword round my loins, the ground trembles under me where I step, and there is no enemy of mine so bold as will not get out of my way as quickly as he can.' He goes on in this strain through several stanzas, and promises at last that if the King returns to attack Toulouse, he, Peire Vidal, will enter the city alone with the routed enemy and conquer it. The story of Coriolanus may possibly have been in his mind, but there are not many traces of his acquaintance with ancient Roman history. As a reward for his prowess he looks

forward to obtaining the much-desired knighthood, for in the tornada of the same *sirventes* he promises Lady Vierna that soon she shall love in him a noble cavalier. This hope, however, was not fulfilled; he was obliged to be content with the knighthood which he had conferred on himself, and which of course other people did not recognise. Nevertheless, he remained invariably attached to Alfonso till the King's death. This loss he felt very deeply, and the words in which he gives utterance to his grief show that his friendship was genuine. 'In great affliction,' he sings, 'must live he who loses his good master, as I have lost the best whom death ever killed. Certainly, I should not live if suicide were not a sin.' This song is dedicated to Peter II. of Aragon, the son of Alfonso, who is called 'corn of a good ear.' It was sent to him from the court of King Aimeric of Hungary, his brother-in-law, to which Peire had retired after the death of his protector, and where he appears to have seen something more of the Germans, whom he had always thoroughly disliked. In the same *sirventes* he apostrophises them in the following words: 'Germans, you mean, bad, and false people, nobody who ever served you has had any pleasure of it.' On a former occasion he had expressed his feelings on the same subject even more energetically. 'The Germans,' he says in another *sirventes*, 'are coarse and vulgar, and if one of them tries to be courteous he becomes quite intolerable; their language is like the barking of dogs. Therefore, I should not care to

be Duke of Friesland, where I should always have to listen to the barking of these tiresome people.' These terms applied to the language of Wolfram von Eschenbach and Walter von der Vogelweide must of course be taken *cum grano salis*, and are certainly more characteristic of the critic than of those criticised by im.

In the Crusades, Peire Vidal took the deepest interest. We have already seen that he himself went to Palestine, but he worked for the cause by his songs more usefully than by his actual presence. I cannot refrain from quoting a few stanzas of one of his *sirventeses* in the original *langue d'oc*, which may serve as an example of the poet's energy in admonishing and reproaching those who were idle in the service of God:

Baros Jesus qu'en crotz fo mes,
Per salvar crestiana gen,
Nos manda totz comunalmen,
Qu'anem cobrar lo saint paes,
On venc per nostr'amor morir.
E si nol volem obezir,
Lai on feniran tuit li plag,
N'auzirem maint esquiu retrag.

Reis aunitz val meins que pages,
Quan viu a lei de recrezen,
E plorals bes qu'autre despen,
E pert so quel pair' a conques.
Aitals reis fari'ad aucir,
Et en lag loc a sebelir,
Quis defen a lei de contrag,
E no pren ni dona gamag.

The 'infamous King' thus denounced is Philip Augustus of France, whom the troubadours hated and

despised almost as unanimously as they extolled Alfonso of Aragon.

This poem, apart from its political allusions, is remarkable as a specimen of Peire Vidal's peculiar manner of mixing the two different forms of *canzo* and *sirventes* together (compare p. 141). Immediately after the passage about the French King just quoted the poet broaches his favourite theme of love, and explains how the unseasonable passion of mature ladies is sure to destroy the whole courteous world. This sudden change occurs in a similar manner in another *sirventes* where, after having reproached the same Philip Augustus as a coward and miser, the poet continues with great *naïveté*, 'But now I must turn my song to my lady, whom I love more than my own eyes or teeth.'

Peire Vidal's faults and errors were in great measure the result of the exaggerated sentiments of the time, and do not detract from his high poetical genius. The best of his contemporaries estimated him correctly, and forgave the great poet the extravagance of his character. 'The greatest fool,' says Bartolomeo Zorgi, another celebrated poet of the time, 'is he who calls Peire Vidal a fool; for without sense it would be impossible to make poems like his.'

The exact date of Peire's death we cannot tell. Most likely it took place about 1210.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BERTRAN DE BORN.

BERTRAN DE BORN is a perfect type of the warlike baron of the middle ages, continually fighting with his neighbours or with his own vassals, and treating the villeins and clowns on his estate with a brutal contempt all the more unpardonable in his case as he openly and deliberately advocates such oppression in his songs. But his warlike ambition was not confined to the squabbles of petty feudal lords. With sword and song he fought in the great political struggles of the time, and the important part he played in the incessant wars of Henry II. of England with the King of France and with his own rebellious sons ought to secure Bertran a place in any comprehensive history of our Angevin kings.

As to the exact date of Bertran's birth the manuscripts contain no information. By inference we find it must have been about the middle of the twelfth century. The old biographers call him Viscount of Autafort, a castle and borough of about a thousand inhabitants in the diocese of Perigord. His manhood fell in a stormy time of external and internal warfare.

The marriage of Henry of Anjou, afterwards Henry II. of England, with the divorced faithless wife of the French King was an abundant source of evil to the young adventurer. It is true that the possessions of Aquitain accruing to him from the marriage for the moment added to his power, but in the long run his large dominions in the west and south-west of France tended to divert his attention from the true focus of his strength—England. The tedious quarrels in which his continental possessions involved him with his feudal overlord, the King of France, greatly increased the troubles of his eventful reign. But far more disastrous were the domestic consequences of this ill-assorted union. History and popular myth have combined to depict Eleanor as the prototype of a ruthless termagant. Whatever may have been the provocations of her truant husband—provocations which, by the way, her own conduct hardly justified her in resenting too harshly—the charge remains against her that by her instigation her sons were first incited to rebel against their father. With much trouble and danger to himself Henry had in 1170 induced his English bishops to assist at a prospective coronation of his eldest son and namesake. Two years later the ceremony was repeated, young Henry's wife, the daughter of King Louis VII. of France, being included, who for reasons unknown had been absent on the former occasion.

The return which Henry received for this highest mark of confidence was the claim on the part of his son to be put in immediate possession either of

Normandy or of England. The refusal of this outrageous demand became the cause of animosities between father and son. Eleanor fanned the flames of discord, and it seems to have been by her advice mainly that young Henry at last broke into open rebellion. He fled from his father's court at Limoges and took refuge with the King of France at St. Denis, where three days afterwards he was joined by his two brothers Richard and Geoffrey. The war which ensued was carried on by both sides with atrocious brutality, not even relieved by bold exploits of arms. The name of the hirelings enlisted by the King of England—Brabançons, from Braband, the country of many of their number—has become a bye-word in history, and the utter want of filial piety, or indeed of any higher motive, on the part of the young princes is at once revolting and astonishing. More than once during his repeated wars with his sons the King's life was attempted, and on one occasion when he was going to a parley with young Henry he was received by a shower of arrows and slightly wounded. Sons who thus disregarded the demands of natural affection could not be expected to be more scrupulous where their country was concerned. Patriotism, more especially English patriotism, never was the strong side of the Plantagenets. In consequence the young princes did not hesitate for a moment to barter away some of the fairest portions of England for promises of assistance from the King of Scotland and the Earl of Flanders, and it was only by Henry's energy and good fortune that

these disgraceful bargains were frustrated. The war dragged on till 1174, and ended with a semblance of reconciliation; Richard being the last to submit to his father.

It was necessary to dwell to this extent on these circumstances in order to gain a background for our centre-figure the Troubadour. There is no direct evidence that Bertran de Born took a prominent part in the first rebellion of the English princes, neither do any of his warlike songs seem to refer to it. But even in case his youth or other circumstances prevented him from being an actor in the events just described, he was sure to be an eager spectator. Soon afterwards we see him in the thick of the fight. He seems to have been on terms of intimacy with the three elder sons of Henry, as is proved by the familiar nicknames by which he addresses them. Young Henry he used to call 'Marinier' (seaman), an interesting fact which shows that a sailor-prince in the Royal family is not altogether a modern invention. Geoffrey, by marriage Duke of Brittany, was 'Rassa,' a name without any distinct meaning to us; and Richard 'Oc e no,' that is 'Yes and no,' which might pass for an indication of straightforward and plain dealing, or, indeed, of the reverse, according to the terms on which prince and poet happened to be.

Bertran's attachment to Prince Henry, the 'Young King,' as he and the old chroniclers frequently call him, was of the utmost importance for the poet's life. It is, indeed, the redeeming feature

of his character. From the first he seems to have espoused the young Prince's cause, and no turn of fortune could ever make him waver in his fealty. It is sad to think that the influence thus acquired was used in further inflaming a nature already hot with pride and ambition. Bertran's biographers lay particular stress on this point. 'Whenever he chose'—the old manuscript says—'he was master of the King of England and of his son; but he wished that the father should always be at war with the son, and the brothers with one another; and he also desired that there should be incessant feud between the Kings of France and England, and whenever there was peace or truce between them he was at great pains and trouble to undo the peace by means of his *sirventeses*, and to prove to each of them how they were dishonoured by such a peace; and he derived much good and also much evil from the mischief he made amongst them.' In another place we are told that King Henry hated Bertran because the poet was 'the friend and counsellor of the young King, his (Henry's) son, who had made war against him; and he believed Sir Bertran bore the whole guilt of it.' Not without reason does Dante place the troubadour in the ninth pit of hell, where, with Mahomet Ali, Mosca dei Lamberti, and other disturbers of Church and State, he is made to do penance for his disastrous counsels. Dante describes him carrying his own head severed from his body in his hand. 'Know then,' says the spectre addressing the poet, 'that I am Bertran de Born, he

who gave evil encouragement to the young King, causing father and son to wage war against each other. Because I parted men thus joined together I now carry my own head severed from its principle of life, my body.' [1]

[1] Some readers may care to know the whole passage referring to our troubadour, one of the most weird and impressive of the 'Inferno.' It occurs in the 28th Canto towards the close, and runs thus:—

Ma io rimasi a riguardar lo stuolo,
E vidi cosa ch'io avrei paura
Senza più pruova di contarla solo;
Se non che conscienzia m'assicura,
La buona compagnia che l'uom francheggia
Sotto l'usbergo del sentirsi pura.
Io vidi certo ed ancor par ch'io 'l veggia,
Un busto senza capo andar, si come
Andavan gli altri della trista greggia.
E 'l capo tronco tenea per le chiome
Pesol con mano, a guisa di lanterna:
E quei mirava noi, e dicea: O me!
Di sè faceva a sè stesso lucerna;
Ed eran due in uno ed uno in due:
Com' esser puo, Quei sa che sì governa.
Quando diritto appiè del ponte fue
Levò 'l braccio alto con tutta la testa
Per appressarne le parole sue,
Che furo: Or vedi la pena molesta
Tu che, spirando vai veggendo i morti:
Vedi s'alcuna è grave come questa.
E perchè tu di me novella porti,
Sappi ch'io son Bertram dal Bornio, quelli
Che al rè giovane diedi i mai conforti;
Io feci 'l padre e 'l figlio in sè ribelli:
Achitofel non fè più d'Absalone
E di David, coi malvagi pungelli.
Perch'io partii così giunte persone,
Partito porto il mio cerebro lasso!
Dal suo principio chè 'n questo troncone;
Così s'osserva in me lo contrappasso.

But I remained to look upon the troop,
And saw a thing which I should be in fear,
Without more proof of telling, I alone,
But that my conscience reassureth me,
The good companion which emboldens man
Under the hauberk of its feeling pure.
I certes saw, and seems I see it still,
A trunk without a head proceeding, so
As went the others of the sorry flock.
And by the hair he held his truncate head
In guise of lantern, pendulous in hand:
And that gazed on us, and it said, 'Oh me!'
He of himself made light unto himself,
And they were two in one, and one in two:
How it can be He knows who governs thus.
When he was right against the bridge's foot,
He raised, with all the head, his arm on high
So to approach to us the words thereof,
Which were: 'See now the troublous penalty
Thou who go'st breathing, looking at the dead,
See whether any is so great as this.
And, for that thou mayst carry of me news,
I, know thou, am Bertran de Born, the man
Who gave the young king ill encouragements.
I mutually made rebels son and sire:
Ahithophel made Absalom no more
And David with his wicked goadings on.
Because I parted persons thus conjoined,
My brain, alas! I carry parted from
Its principle which is in this my trunk.
So retribution is in me observed.

W. M. ROSSETTI'S *translation.*

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### BERTRAN AND RICHARD COUNT OF POITOU.

How this great influence over the young King was acquired the old manuscripts do not tell us. The first time we hear of Bertran in history is in connection with the quarrels between Richard, at that time Count of Poitou, and his unruly barons in the south of France. Amongst these Bertran de Born took a prominent position. His worldly possessions were of comparatively small importance, but his fame as a poet, his personal valour, his indomitable fierceness and love of war made up for this want, and qualified him for the part of ringleader and prime intellectual mover of the rebellious party. A cause of quarrel between such an overlord as Richard and such a vassal as Bertran may easily be imagined; but beyond these public grounds of mutual animosity there seems to have been some personal grudge between them. The manuscripts speak of a lady in whose heart the troubadour supplanted his princely rival, and in addition to this fact—perhaps in consequence of it—we hear of Richard's hostile interference in his adversary's private concerns.

Bertran de Born had a brother, Constantine by name, with whom he shared the possession of Castle Autafort. He is described by the manuscripts as 'a good knight, but not a man to trouble himself much about valour or honour.' A man of this kind stood little chance of holding his own against our troubadour, and internal evidence strongly points towards the latter as the aggressor in the endless quarrels between the two brothers. This, however, Bertran's biographer does not acknowledge. He goes on to say that Constantine 'hated Bertran at all seasons, and wished well to those who wished ill to Bertran, and he took from him the Castle of Autafort, which belonged to them both in common. But Sir Bertran soon recovered it, and drove his brother from all his possessions.' At this juncture Richard interfered in favour of Constantine. Together with Aimar, Viscount of Limoges, and other powerful barons, he invaded Bertran's domains, which soon became the scene of atrocities such as are the usual concomitants of civil feud. Castle Autafort itself was threatened, but its master remained undaunted. In a powerful *sirventes* he hurls defiance at his enemies. A war-song more recklessly bold, more graphically real, has seldom been heard.

Let the reader judge. 'All day long,' Bertran says, 'I fight, and am at work, to make a thrust at them and defend myself, for they are laying waste my land and burning my crops; they pull up my trees by the root and mix my corn with the straw.

Cowards and brave men are my enemies. I constantly disunite and sow hatred amongst the barons, and then remould and join them together again, and try to give them brave hearts and strong; but I am a fool for my trouble, for they are made of base metal.'

In these last sentences the poet discloses the secret of his power. It was the irresistible sway of his eloquence over men's minds, his 'don terrible de la familiarité,' as the elder Mirabeau puts it, which enabled Bertran to play on men's minds as on the strings of a lute, and to make them form and vary their purpose according to his impulse. In this very *sirventes* we gain an idea of the manner in which he lashes the hesitating barons into resistance against the common oppressor. Talairand is accused of indolence—'he does not trot nor gallop, motionless he lies in his cot, neither lance nor arrow does he move. He lives like a Lombard pedlar, and when others depart for the war he stretches himself and yawns.' Another baron, whose name, William of Gordon, strikes the English ear with familiar note, is warned against Richard's persuasive statecraft. 'I love you well,' Bertran says, 'but my enemies want to make a fool and a dupe of you, and the time seems long to them before they see you in their ranks.' The *sirventes* winds up with a climax of fierce invective against Richard himself. 'To Perigeux close to the wall, so that I can throw my battle-axe over it, I will come well armed, and

riding on my horse Bayard; and if I find the glutton of Poitou he shall know the cut of my sword. A mixture of brain and splinters of iron he shall wear on his brow.'

Bertran's assertions of his dangerous influence over men's minds were not the idle boastings of poetic vanity. A terrible conspiracy was formed against Richard, and the greatest nobles of the country, the Viscounts of Ventadorn, of Camborn, of Segur, and of Limoges, the Count of Perigord, William of Gordon, the Lord of Montfort, besides many important cities, are mentioned amongst the rebels. A meeting took place, and we may imagine the picturesque scene when 'in the old monastery of San Marsal they swore on a missal' to stand by each other and never to enter into separate treaties with Richard. The special causes of this rebellion are not known to us. We may surmise, and indeed know in a general way, that the hand of their lion-hearted lord weighed heavily on the provinces of Southern France. But the veil which covers this portion of Henry II.'s reign has never yet been fully lifted, and till that is done we must be satisfied with such hints as may be gleaned from scattered bits of information in ancient writers. Our Provençal manuscript offers a clue not without interest to the historical student. It speaks of certain *rendas de caretas*, rates of carts or wagons, most likely a toll which Richard had unlawfully appropriated, and which in reality belonged to the

'Young King,' that is to Prince Henry, to whom it had been given by his father.

This latter circumstance connects our story with less obscure portions of history. It is well known that in 1182 King Henry demanded of his sons Richard and Geoffrey to do homage to their elder brother for the possessions respectively held by them, a demand indignantly refused by Richard. Hence the invasion of Aquitain by young Henry, and hence perhaps also the latter's intimacy with our poet, who, as the intellectual mover of the rebellion against Richard, was an ally by no means to be despised. Thus the war between the brothers went on raging for a time, Bertran fighting in the foremost ranks, and at the same time fanning the flame with his songs. We still possess *sirventeses* in which he addresses the chief barons by name, reminding them of their grievances, praising the brave and castigating the waverers with his satire. Such were the means of diplomatic pressure in those days. But primitive though such measures of admonition may appear, they were none the less efficacious with those concerned. Papiol, Bertran's faithful minstrel, went about the country boldly reciting his master's taunts in the lordly hall of the baron or at the gate of the castle, where the throng of the vassals would listen to his song. Taking into account the excitability of the southern nature further inflamed by the struggles of the time, together with the general interest of the subject and the consummate art of treatment and delivery, one can form some

idea of the dangerous influence of the troubadours, too dangerous and too generally acknowledged to be despised by the mightiest princes of the time.

Bertran de Born is evidently quite conscious of the force of his songs, and the use he makes of his power betrays great sagacity of political purpose. But with him the love of war for war's sake is so great that sometimes every deeper design seems to vanish before this ruling passion. His character is a psychological problem in this respect. A man who, after a life of wildest storm and stress, passed in continual strife with domestic and political foes, dies in peace and in the quiet possession of his usurped dominion, must have been endowed in a more than usual degree with calmness and deliberation. But there is no trace of this in his songs. They breathe one and all the recklessness and animal buoyancy of a savage chieftain who regards fighting as the only enjoyment and true vocation of a man. One of his warlike *sirventeses* ends with the naïve exclamation by way of *tornada* or *envoi*, 'Would that the great barons could always be inflamed against each other!' In another he gives vent to his insatiate pugnacity with most unqualified openness. 'There is peace everywhere,' he says, 'but I still retain a rag (*pans*) of warfare; a sore in his eye (*pustella en son huelh*) to him who tries to part me from it, although I may have begun the quarrel! Peace gives me no pleasure, war is my delight. This is my law, other I have none. I don't regard Monday or Tuesday, or week, or month, or

year: April or March would not hinder me in doing damage to those who wrong me. Three of them would not get the value of an old leather strap from me.'[1]

Things in Aquitain began in the meantime to take a more peaceful turn than our warlike singer could wish or expect. King Henry appeared on the scene as peacemaker between his sons, and by his command young Henry had to declare himself satisfied with a money compensation for his claims of overlordship. This compliance drew on him the momentary indignation of the troubadour, who calls him 'a king of cowards;' and adds that 'not by lying asleep will he become master of Cumberland, or King of England, or conqueror of Ireland.' The defection of their leader proved fatal to the league of the barons, who separately tried to make their peace with Richard and quietly submitted to his punishing wrath. Not so Bertran de Born. His first impulse was to give utterance to his contempt for the nobles who by their want of courage and union destroyed their last chance of safety. 'I

[1] I must warn the reader not to mistake the above lines for an attempt at rendering a somewhat similar war-song generally ascribed to Bertran de Born, and translated into English as one of his poems. It is the magnificent *sirventes* beginning 'Bem platz lo gais temps de pascor' (Well I love the gay time of spring), and so much is it in the spirit of our troubadour that even one of the old manuscripts has his name affixed to it. Unfortunately, however, the evidence of numerous other and better manuscripts is against this plausible surmise, and by their authority the poem must be ascribed to William de St. Gregory, a troubadour comparatively little known.

will sing a *sirventes*,' Bertran exclaims, 'of the cowardly barons, and after that not waste another word upon them. More than a thousand spurs have I broken in them, and never could I make them trot or gallop. Now they allow themselves to be robbed without saying a word. God's curse upon them!' His next thought must have been to find a new head and centre for such remnants of the rebellious forces as still remained unsubdued. In this endeavour he was more successful than might have been expected under the circumstances. Geoffrey, Henry's younger brother, who had been commissioned by the King to facilitate the reconciliation between Richard and his barons, suddenly declared himself in favour of the latter, and began to invade Poitou with all the forces at his disposal. We have no direct evidence of Bertran's active participation in this affair. But we know of his intimacy with Geoffrey, whom, after the desertion of the cause by young Henry, he hails as a worthy pretender to the crowns of England and Normandy. We are therefore justified in conjecturing that the bold troubadour's advice may have had much weight with a prince of Geoffrey's ambition.

But here the matter was not to end. In this emergency young Henry offered his services to his father, promising to advise or if necessary to enforce a reconciliation between his brothers. But no sooner had he arrived at the seat of war than he also joined the league of the barons. Richard in his extreme need implored the aid of his father, who immediately

entered into alliance with Alfonso of Aragon for the purpose of subduing his rebellious sons. The princes sought the support of the Count of Toulouse and other powerful nobles of the south of France. War on a large scale became inevitable, and this prospect was greeted by Bertran with an exuberance of joy. He revels beforehand in the brilliant and terrible scenes of a field of battle. 'As soon as we arrive,' he exclaims, 'the tournament shall begin. The Catalans and the Aragonese will fall to the ground fast and thick. The pommels of their saddles will be of no use to them, for our friends strike long blows. And the splinters will fly up to heaven, and silk and samite will be torn to shreds, and tents and huts destroyed.'

But once more Bertran's high hopes of victory were to be cut short by the hand of fate. King Henry was laying siege to Limoges, and his two rebellious sons were preparing a large expedition for the rescue of the threatened city, when suddenly young Henry was taken ill with a violent fever and died shortly afterwards. On his death-bed he implored his father's pardon and asked for a last interview, but the King, although deeply moved, was persuaded by his counsellors to refuse this favour. It is said that he feared a snare, and after his former experiences this suspicion was but too easily accounted for. He, however, sent a ring in token of forgiveness, which his son pressed to his dying lips. This death was a blow to both contending parties. In spite of their dissensions, King Henry had deeply

loved his son, who, according to the unanimous testimony of his contemporaries, was a high-spirited youth of undaunted courage and noblest aspirations. Bertran's grief also was true, and, for the moment at least, unselfish. His unwavering friendship for young Henry is the one redeeming feature in the reckless warrior's character, and this feeling, which death itself had not destroyed, now inspired him with a song of noblest pathos. It is a dirge as sad and as true as ever friend has sung for friend. I have attempted the following literal translation of three stanzas, in which the metrical peculiarities of the original are strictly adhered to. These peculiarities, which frequently serve the troubadours for the display of their consummate skill, are here made the vehicle of genuine emotion, and give truth and colour to the poem. Note particularly the repetition of the same words at the end of the first, fifth, and eighth lines of each stanza, which strikes the note of unrelieved sadness with the monotony of a death-knell :—

PLANH.

Si tuit li dol el plor el marrimen
E las dolors el dan el caitivier
Que hom agues en est segle dolen,
Fosson ensems, sembleran tuit leugier
Contra la mort del jove rei engles,
Don reman pretz e jovens doloiros,
El mons escurs e tenhs e tenebros,
Sems de tot joi, ples de tristor e d'ira.

Estenta mort, plena de marrimen,
Vanar te pods quel melhor cavalier
As tolt al mon qu'anc fos de nulha gen ;
Quar non es res qu'a pretz aja mestier,

Que tot no fos el jove rei engles :
E fora meils, s'a deu plagues razos,
Que visques el que mant autr' enojos
Qu'anc no feron als pros mas dol et ira.

D'aquest segle flac, plen de marrimen,
S'amors s'en vai, son joi tenh mensongier,
Que ren noi a que non torn en cozen ;
Totz jorns veiretz que val mens oi que ier :
Cascus se mir el jove rei engles
Qu'era del mon lo plus valens dels pros.
Ar es anatz sos gens cors amoros,
Dont es dolors e desconortz et ira.

*Translation.*

COMPLAINT.

If all the pain, the grief, the bitter tears,
The sorrow, the remorse, the scornful slight,
Of which man in this life the burden bears
Were thrown a-heap, their balance would be light
Against the death of our young English King.
Valour and youth stand wailing at his loss ;
The world is waste, and dark, and dolorous,
Void of all joy, full of regret and sorrow.

All-present death, cruel and full of tears,
Now mayst thou boast that of the noblest knight
Whose deeds were ever sung to human ears,
Thou hast deprived the world. No fame so bright
That it could darken our young English King.
'Twere better, if it pleased our Lord, to give
Life back to him, than that the traitors live
Who to good men cause but regret and sorrow.

The world is base and dark and full of tears.
Its love has fled, its pleasure passed away ;
A falsehood is its truth. Each day appears,
But to regret its better yesterday.
Look up, ye all, to our young English King,
The best among the brave and valorous !
Now is his gentle heart afar from us,
And we are left to our regret and sorrow.

With the death of young Henry the rebellion was practically at an end. Again the barons tried to make peace with Richard and the King; again they submitted to the most humiliating terms of submission; but again also Bertran de Born's courage remained undaunted, although against him, as the evil counsellor of young Henry, the wrath of the King was hottest. Soon the army of the allies arrived before Castle Autafort, and little hope of rescue remained. Still Bertran held out, and ultimately succumbed only to the treachery of a friend.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SIEGE OF AUTAFORT—BERTRAN'S DEATH.

THE manuscripts tell a curious story with regard to this treachery. The reader will remember that at the beginning of the war Henry had entered into a league with the King of Aragon. This king was Alfonso II., well known as one of the most liberal protectors of the troubadours, who in return lavished their praise upon him. Bertran de Born was on terms of intimacy with him, and the manuscript tells us that 'he was very glad that King Alfonso was amongst the besieging army, for he was his most especial friend.' It appears that Castle Autafort was better provided with meat and drink than the camp, for King Alfonso, on the ground of their intimacy, asked Bertran for a supply of bread, wine, and meat. This the troubadour generously granted, but in return asked another favour, which was nothing less than that the King of Aragon should use his authority to remove the besieging engines from a certain side of the castle where the wall was rotten and would give way easily. Such a demand implied the fullest confidence in him to whom it was made, and this confidence unfortunately turned

out to be misplaced. The King of Aragon immediately betrayed the secret to Henry; the assault was directed against the weak point of the defences, and the castle fell.

Such is the story as told by Bertran's biographer, and, if true, it fully accounts for the troubadour's implacable hatred evinced by many poetic onslaughts on the private and political character of Alfonso. But we ought to hesitate in condemning on such doubtful evidence the conduct of a king who by the all but unanimous testimony of contemporary writers was a model of knightly virtues and wholly incapable of the base treachery here laid to his charge.

However this may have been, Bertran's castle was taken, and he a prisoner in the hands of his bitterest enemies. But even in this extremity Bertran's genius did not forsake him, and it is on this occasion chiefly that we catch a glimpse of that undauntable strength of character which, combined with a keen insight into the secret springs of human impulse, explains his extraordinary sway over men's minds. I follow closely the graphic account of the Provençal manuscript:—'After the castle was taken Sir Bertran, with all his people, was brought to the tent of King Henry. And the King received him very ill, and said to him,

'"Bertran, Bertran! you have boasted that never half of your sense would be needful to you at any time, but know that now you stand in need of the whole of it."

'"Sir," replied Bertran, "it is true that I have said so, and I have spoken the truth."

'And the King said, "Then now, it seems, you have lost your wits altogether."

'"Sir," said Bertran, "it is true that I have lost all my wits."

'"And how is that?" replied the King.

'"Sir," said Bertran, "the day that the valiant young Henry your son died I lost sense and cunning and consciousness."

'And the King, when he heard Bertran's words, wept for his son, and great grief rose to his heart and to his eyes, and he could not constrain himself, and fainted away from pain. And when he recovered himself he called out to Bertran, and said, weeping,

'"Sir Bertran! Sir Bertran! you are right and wise in saying that you lost your sense for the sake of my son, for he loved you better than any other man in the world; and for the love of him I release your person, your lands, and your castle, and I will receive you to my grace and favour, and I give you five hundred marks of silver for the damage you have suffered at my hands."

'And Bertran fell at his feet, tendering him service and gratitude.'

We may feel inclined to look upon the substantial data of the closing sentences with some amount of scepticism; but the consummate skill with which Bertran at first excites the curiosity of the King, the way in which he finally acts upon his feelings, all

the more powerfully as his own grief is true and powerful—all this is much beyond the invention of a simple-minded Provençal scribe. These traits are too intrinsically real for mere fiction; they are inherent in the nature of a strong man and a great poet. It is also an undeniable fact that soon after the events described, Bertran was again in possession of his castle, and that the remonstrances of his unfortunate brother Constantine were treated with scorn by both Richard and King Henry.

To the former Bertran now seems to have attached himself, and during the incessant feuds in which the lion-hearted monarch subsequently was involved with the King of France and his own unruly vassals the troubadour seems to have remained faithful to him, barring always such inclinations towards whoever might be the aggressive party, which Bertran's unbounded love of fighting made excusable. We possess a *sirventes* dated many years later in which the poet rejoices at Richard's release from the German prison, 'because now again we shall see walls destroyed and towers overthrown and our enemies in chains.'

But I must not detain the reader with further stories of feuds and battles, of which most likely he has had already more than his fill. It remains to add a few words with regard to another side of Bertran's life and poetry, his love affairs. These, it must be hoped, will form a somewhat more harmonious conclusion to an account of a wild, reckless career.

Bertran's love-songs are not the emanations of a pure guileless heart, such as the *canzos* of Guillem de Cabestanh or Folquet of Marseilles. Upon the whole one is glad to find that they are not and do not pretend to be such; for a lover's unselfish devotion could be nothing but pretension in a man of his character. Bertran was, and appears even in his *canzos*, a man of the world, to whom his love affairs are of secondary importance. Yet these *canzos* are not without passion, and not seldom have a peculiar charm of simple grace, all the more delightful because of its contrast with the warlike harshness of his ordinary strains. What, for instance, can be more sweet and graceful than the following stanza, which occurs at the beginning of one of Bertran's *sirventeses*?—

> When the young blossoms of the spring appear
> And paint the bushes pink and white and green,
> Then in the sweetness of the nascent year
> I clothe my song; at all times such has been
> The wont of birds; and as a bird am I
> Who love the fairest lady tenderly:
> I dare to love her longing for love's fruit,
> But never dare to speak; my heart is mute.

After such an opening the reader expects a love-song of tenderest pathos. But no. After another stanza, Bertran suddenly changes his mind. Perhaps the lady whom he silently adored did not understand or appreciate his passion. 'As without a lady'—he now exclaims—'one cannot make a love-song, I am going to sing a fresh and novel *sirventes*.' And forthwith he begins his ordinary strain

of invective against a whole catalogue of hostile barons.

Of the objects of Bertran's passion—for we know of two, and there may have been others of whom we do not know—the old manuscripts give us a prolix account. We first hear of a Lady Maenz or Matilda of Montignac, wife of Count Talairand (for as a matter of course she was married), and sister to two other ladies celebrated by the troubadours for their beauty and courteous demeanour. The Lady Maenz was wooed by many noble knights and barons; and even three scions of royalty, the Princes Richard and Geoffrey of England and King Alfonso of Aragon, are mentioned amongst her suitors. But Bertran's valour and fame as a poet gained the victory in her heart over power and riches. Such at least is the account of the old biography, founded, it seems, on a somewhat vague statement in one of Bertran's own poems, to the effect that his lady 'refused Poitou, and Tolosa, and Bretagne and Saragosa, but has given her love to the valorous poor knight'—meaning of course himself.

Unfortunately the course of true love did not run smooth for long; the blast of jealousy troubled its waters. Bertran had written a few songs in praise of another lady, the wife of his friend the Viscount of Camborn. Pure gallantry, he alleged, was the motive, but the Lady Maenz refused to view the matter in this innocent light, and angrily discarded her lover. Bertran was in despair; he knew, the manuscript says, 'that he could never

regain her, or find another lady so beautiful, so good, so gentle, and so learned.' In this dilemma Bertran had recourse to the following pretty conceit of gallantry. Whether he had heard the story of the Athenian artist who, from the combined charms of the most beautiful women, moulded the type of the Goddess of Love, seems doubtful; but the coincidence of ideas between the troubadour and the antique sculptor is striking. For Bertran de Born, the biographer tells us, went to the most beautiful ladies of the country asking from each the loan of her greatest charm (metaphorically it must be understood), and from these he reconstructed the ideal type of his lost love. The poem in which this is done is a model of grace and gallantry, flattering alike to the divers ladies whose beauties are commemorated, and to the one who in her being concentrates and surpasses the charms of all others.

But her heart was unmoved, and, in a fit of amorous despair we must suppose, the troubadour now offered his services as knight and poet to another lady, complaining at the same time bitterly of the cruelty of his former love. His offer was not accepted, neither was it disdainfully rejected. It would have been a breach of courtesy and good faith to deprive a lady of her lover, and much as the Lady Tibors (this was the name of Bertran's new flame) may have been desirous of the praise of one of the greatest troubadours of the time, she resisted the temptations of vanity. Her answer to Bertran is a model of good sense; at the same time it

smacks a little of that technical pedantry with which the ladies of Provence were wont to treat difficult cases of love. 'Either,' said the Lady Tibors. 'your quarrel is of a slight and temporary kind—and in that case I will try to effect your peace with your lady; or else you have been guilty of a serious offence towards her—and, if so, neither I nor any good lady ought to accept your services. But in case I find on inquiry that your lady has left you from fickleness and caprice, I shall be honoured by your love.' The first of these surmises fortunately turned out to be true. By the interference of Lady Tibors the lovers' quarrel was settled, and in commemoration of the event Bertran was ordered to write a song in which he declares his immutable love for Lady Maenz, paying at the same time a grateful and graceful tribute to the kind peacemaker.

This is all we hear of the beautiful Lady Maenz. But Bertran appears presently as the passionate admirer of another lady, of much more exalted rank. It must have been soon after his reconciliation with Count Richard that the troubadour met in his camp the Count's sister Mathilda, the wife of the celebrated Duke Henry of Brunswick. The inflammable heart of the poet caught fire at her beauty, and his enthusiastic praise seems to have been received with much condescension. It tends to prove Bertran's importance that it was by Richard's express desire that his sister showed kindness to the troubadour, who, the manuscript adds, 'was a re-

nowned man and valorous, and might be of great use to the Count.' In the praise of Mathilda Bertran wrote several beautiful *canzos*, one of which is particularly remarkable for an allusion in the first line to so prosaic a subject as dinner—the poem having been composed, it is said, one Sunday when that meal failed to be forthcoming at the ill-provided camp.

In addition to these amorous entanglements Bertran was also married, although neither he nor his biographer deigns to mention so unimportant a personage as his wife. We know, however, that his children at Bertran's death came to a compromise with their uncle Constantine as to the possession of Castle Autafort and its dependencies. One of his sons inherited with his father's name some of his father's poetic talent and, it appears, all his fierce passions. By this younger Bertran de Born, who has sometimes been mistaken for the great poet, we possess a *sirventes* against King John worthy of the paternal example. The luckless king is mercilessly assaulted. The loss of his continental possessions is attributed to cowardice and irresolution, and the king's immoderate love of the chase does not escape notice. The barons also come in for their share of vituperation. In fact everything is done *more patrio.* Bertran died at an advanced age, having entered a monastery not long before his death.

Such was the not inappropriate close of a life passed in the wildest turmoil of political strife. As a type of the warlike mediæval baron, reckless and

ruthless, Bertran stands unsurpassed in history or literature. But we have seen that the refining and softening influences of friendship, of love, of knightly courtesy, were not wholly absent from his career.

Another consideration suggests itself. Would it not be worth while for the authorities of the Record Office to secure a competent hand to glean from the biography of this and other troubadours the many important and hitherto totally neglected facts bearing on the continental policy of the Plantagenets ?

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE MONK OF MONTAUDON.

Of the life of the Monk of Montaudon the old manuscripts tell us little. We are ignorant even of his name, and only know that he was descended from a noble family residing at Castle Vic in Auvergne. Being a younger son he was, as the biography naïvely puts it, 'made a monk of,' and entered the Abbey of Orlac (Aurillac), in the vicinity of his father's castle; some time afterwards he became Prior of Montaudon. Soon, however, it became apparent that the cowl had not made the monk; he began to compose gay stanzas and satiric *sirventeses* on the events of the day. The knights and barons of the adjacent castles were pleased with the poet's gay, genial ways. They asked him to feasts and tournaments, and rewarded his songs with rich gifts, conscientiously remitted by him to the treasury of his cloister; a circumstance which goes far to explain the leniency with which his superiors looked on his infringements of the monastic rules. At last the monk asked permission of the Abbot of Orlac to regulate his way of living according to the commands of King Alfonso of Aragon, known to us as the

revenger of Guillem de Cabestanh's death, and a great protector and friend of troubadours in general. The granting of this comprehensive prayer tends to prove at once the lucrativeness of the monk's poetic endeavours, and the considerate tolerance of the worthy prelate. For no sooner was the permission given than Alfonso bade the monk eat meat, compose gay songs, and court the favour of a lady. 'Et el si fes,' 'and so he did,' the manuscript adds significantly.

There were held at that time certain gay assemblies at Puy Sainte Marie, where the noble ladies and gentlemen of many miles round met for a season to enjoy courteous pastimes. The knights measured their strength in the lists, the troubadours sang their sweetest *canzos* for prizes, made more valuable by the beautiful hands which distributed them. At this gay court the Monk of Montaudon was now created master of the revels, and in this capacity had to hold the celebrated sparrow-hawk, a time-honoured ceremony, performed by him with portly dignity, we may imagine. At the beginning of each of these annual feasts the 'Master of the Court of Puy' stood in the midst of the noble guests, took a sparrow-hawk on his fist, and calmly waited till one of the great barons relieved him of his burden. The acceptance of the bird involved the obligation of bearing the not inconsiderable expenses of the whole feast, and was therefore the exclusive privilege of the richest and most liberal nobles. Perhaps it was owing to this pretty but frequently ruinous custom

that the Court of Puy itself came to an untimely end. After its expiration the Monk of Montaudon went to Spain, where his abbot conferred upon him the dignity of Prior of Villafranca, in acknowledgment, most likely, of his exemplary life. This monastery, also, the monk enriched with the gifts of his literary patrons. He lived to an advanced age, and died much esteemed and loved by his brethren. He flourished about the end of the twelfth century.

From this short sketch of the monk's life some anticipatory notion of his poetry may be formed. There is in his works a spirit of freshness and animal vigour which ought somewhat to atone for a considerable admixture of grossness in thought and expression. . Whatever the poet's faults may be, hypocrisy is not amongst them; and, to leave no doubt whatever as to his tastes, he has dedicated three entire songs of moderate size to the enumeration of all the things in the world which excite his just displeasure. A fourth and supplementary poem describes the more agreeable aspects of life by way of contrast. This *catalogue raisonné* of lights and shadows is exceedingly curious, and outspoken beyond the imagination and endurance of polite minds and ears.

Amongst the most detestable things, the monk ranks quarrelsome and arrogant people, a halting horse, a young knight without a rent in his shield, a monk with a long beard, a proud though poor lady, and finally, an over-affectionate husband. This last point is again highly characteristic of the

Provençal conception of marriage already referred to. Our poet also abhors a small piece of meat in a large dish; and that a little wine with a great quantity of water is not to his taste, we would willingly believe without the testimony of St. Martin, solemnly invoked. His culinary principles being thus established, the monk proceeds to take us into his confidence with regard to the tender secrets of his heart. We conclude, from his confessions, that he has met with some ill-treatment at the hands of those members of the fair sex who, although of maturer beauty, have not yet abandoned their claims to admiration. Only personal experience can account for the poet's bitter resentment. Three times he returns to the point, growing more venomous with every new attack. In one instance he goes so far as to use the ungallant expression, 'Vielha caserna'—old barracks.

In this manner he goes on grumbling and complaining of contrary winds when he wants to start on a voyage, of badly-lined fur caps, false friends, bad fiddlers, and other miscellaneous evils of this wicked world. A whole litany of saints is called to witness frequently on such precarious points, as to remind one of the Italian brigand, who prays to his Madonna previously to cutting purses or throats, as the case may be.

But the monk is not an entire pessimist. His praise is as eloquent as his vituperation. He likes gaiety and carousals, courteous knights and noble ladies. A powerful man, he wishes to be friendly

to his friends, hostile to his foes. The same un-Christian sentiment is repeated still more emphatically in the further course of the poem.

> The hated foeman's death I cherish,
> The more, if by my hand he perish.

Milder impulses, however, are not wanting. In two charming, melodious stanzas the poet depicts the delights of a summer's day passed with his love by the side of the murmuring brook, while the air is sweet with the fragrance of blossoms and the song of the nightingale. Truth compels me to confess, that in close juxtaposition to this charming idyl, the very material wish is expressed of having a '*grans salmos ad hora nona*'—that is, a large salmon for supper.

The Monk of Montaudon, as the reader will perceive, was little given to sentimentality, and the love-songs which he wrote, in compliance with the custom of the time, show accordingly more cleverness than true feeling, They are, however, full of happy turns of expression, and particularly abound with well-chosen similes—a proof that the poet was by no means wanting in imagination. Nevertheless, it must be confessed that satire was his true field of action, and we are not surprised at seeing a man of his keen sense of ridicule turn this weapon against those objects of superlative romantic adoration—women. The weaknesses of the fair sex are indeed the theme of two remarkable *sirventeses* by our troubadour, which we now must consider a little more closely. They deserve attention, both by the

original boldness of their satire and by the quaint disguise in which this main purpose is clad. The form adopted by the monk is that of a vision, familiar to the reader from those two great monuments of mediæval literature, the 'Divina Commedia' and 'Piers the Ploughman.' Heaven itself, indeed, is the scene of the troubadour's poem, but a heaven how different from the celestial abode to which the inspired Italian singer was welcomed by Beatrice!

The Monk of Montaudon introduces us into the midst of a legal action, the cause of which is, I am almost ashamed to say, that immemorial privilege of the fair sex to counteract the ravages of time by the rosy bloom of artificial colour. The scene of the action, as has been seen before, is heaven; the Judge, the Deity itself; the monks act as accusers; the ladies are defendants. The painted cheeks of the latter are alleged to outshine the votive pictures in the monasteries. Painting, and the mixing of colours, the monks assert to be their own inventions, to the use of which the ladies have no claim or title. This monstrous allegation the ladies, of course, deny indignantly. Colouring, they say, is their natural birthright, and has been practised by them long before either monks or votive pictures were thought of.

At this juncture a compromise is proposed by the bench, to the effect that ladies on the right side of twenty-five shall be allowed to retain the bloom of youth by what means they please for a further

term of twenty years. But the vicious monks refuse to grant more than ten years; and it is only by the intercession of those accomplished diplomats, SS. Peter and Lawrence, that a medium time of fifteen years is at last agreed upon by the contending parties. Forty years, then, is the limit up to which, to judge from this decision, a Provençal lady might, without incurring ridicule, play youthful parts in life's comedy. 'But,' the monk adds, 'I see that the ladies have broken their promise, which is unfair and wicked; few only have been faithful to their vow.' He further enters upon a detailed enumeration of the various ingredients of paint which, by the way, seems to throw some new light on that interesting question in the history of mediæval art, the composition of colours previous to the introduction of the oil-medium. 'The old monks,' we hear, 'are deprived of their beans, the only thing which they can eat; and they are therefore left without any food. The price of saffron also, which ought to be used for the sauces of *ragoûts*, has been driven up by the ladies to such a degree, that people over the sea begin to complain, as pilgrims tell us. Let the ladies take the cross, and go themselves to Palestine, to fetch the saffron of which they stand in such need.'

In the second poem the ladies have been charged with the breach of the former treaty, and it seems that the monk has been summoned to heaven for a preparatory consultation. The Supreme Judge is indignant at such audacity. 'Monk,' he says, 'I hear the ladies have broken their promise; go down,

for the love of me, to tell them that if they again use colour, I shall take dire revenge.' But the poet has evidently been under gentle pressure since the last trial. He now takes the part of the ladies in the warmest terms. 'Gently, gently, my lord!' he interposes; 'you must have patience with the ladies, for it is their nature to sweetly adorn their countenance.' To this opinion he adheres with obstinacy. In vain it is alleged against him that the ladies, by trying to perpetuate their youth, infringe the unalterable laws of Nature. The monk is not to be shaken. There is only one alternative, he thinks—either to grant unfading beauty to the ladies, or else to deprive the whole human race of the art of painting.

This is, in brief outline, the argument of two of the quaintest productions mediæval literature can show. The bold cynicism with which the delicate secrets of the dressing-room are revealed justly surprises us in a troubadour of noble family and liberal education; but much more are we astonished at the familiarity with which the Deity itself is mixed up with these worldly matters. It is true that, in the old Mysteries and Miracle-plays, tolerated and even countenanced by the Church, sacred topics are treated with a naïve simplicity strange to modern religious feeling. But the experienced eye can almost always discern the under-current of sacred awe at the bottom of the wildest outburst of popular imagination. Even the 'Wanton Wife of Bath,' whose tongue is a match for all the saints in heaven,

'trembles at his sight,' when the Saviour himself appears in his glory. This sacred tremor is entirely unknown to the Monk of Montaudon, who, moreover, as an artistic poet addressing a refined audience, is without the excuse of popular rudeness and ignorance. Yet I think we should be unjust in ascribing to him any conscious intention of blasphemy, or even irreverence. Supposing even he had been a sceptic, he was at the same time too much attached to life and its pleasures to parade his heresies at the risk of his neck. The only way of solving the psychological puzzle is to follow the ancient example of the monk's superiors, and to make ample allowance for the reckless buoyancy of a poet's fancy, difficult to check at a certain point when once let loose. To give an idea of the ease with which he moves in the celestial regions, I will quote the opening stanza of another poem, the tone of which reminds one somewhat of the 'Prelude in Heaven' of Goethe's 'Faust.' It seems to have been written at a time when, after a prolonged stay at his monastery, the author was fain to set out on another expedition.

Up to heaven I found my way
Lately: you may trust my word,
Welcome sweet bade me the Lord,
He whose all-command obey
Land and sea, and hill and dell.'
'Monk, why do you seek my throne?
Tell me how fares Montaudon,
Where thy pious brethren dwell?

The drift of the poem is easily discernible.

Some of his monastic brethren had evidently remarked upon the poet's worldly ways; and to silence these, the very highest authority is now brought to bear on the subject. This is the reassuring answer the monk receives to his pretended conscientious scruples: 'I like you to laugh and sing, for the world grows merrier, and Montaudon gains through it.' By such an argument, coming from such a quarter, the sourest of ascetics was reduced to acquiescence.

A troubadour who, as we have seen, wholly disregarded the rules of courteous gallantry could not be expected to use much consideration where his own sex and his rivals in art were concerned. Accordingly, we find that one of the most venomous literary satires of that libel-loving age owes its existence to our author. It ought, however, to be mentioned, in justice to him, that another troubadour had set the example of wholesale abuse. The Monk of Montaudon's *sirventes* is, indeed, avowedly founded on a similar production by Peire of Alvernhe, in which that distinguished poet gives vent to his affectionate feelings towards no less than twelve contemporary troubadours, some of them celebrated poets, others entirely unknown to us, but evidently men of considerable reputation at the time. One of his victims, the sweet singer of love, Bernart of Ventadorn, has been mentioned before. Of another no less renowned troubadour, Guiraut de Bornelh, it is said that 'he resembles a dry blanket in the sun, with his thin, miserable voice, which

sounds like that of an old woman crying out water in the street. If he saw himself in a mirror [meaning, "as others see him"], he would not think himself worth a roseberry.' In this manner Peire of Alvernhe goes on through twelve stanzas, battering down reputations in order to erect on their ruins the column of his own glory. 'Peire of Alvernhe,' he winds up, 'has a fine voice, and can sing high and low, filling the air with sweetest sound. His would be the highest praise, but for the obscurity of his words, which hardly any one can understand.' The candid reader who would see in this last qualification a remnant of modesty would be vastly mistaken; for a dark, involved style was considered by connoisseurs as the sign of highest genius, and it was chiefly to his *motz oscurs* (dark words) and *rims cars* (rare rhymes) that Arnaut Daniel owed that place of honour awarded to him in Petrarch's beautiful lines—

> Fra tutti il primo Arnaldo Daniello
> Gran maestro d'amor; ch' alla sua terra
> Ancor fa onor col suo dir nuovo e bello.[1]

It is satisfactory to notice that in Peire of Alvernhe's case exceeding pride has met with due castigation. For in some of the manuscripts the opening lines of the self-laudatory stanza have been travestied by a witty copyist into a very differing meaning. 'Peire of Alvernhe,' this altered version reads, 'sings like a frog in a pond, although he

[1] 'First among all, Arnaut Daniel, the great master of love, who still does honour to his country by his new and beautiful parlance.'

praises himself above all the world.' The remainder of the stanza, however, has been left unaltered, for Peire's high literary position was an undeniable fact. The manuscripts call him 'the best troubadour in the world till Guiraut de Bornelh (his "dry blanket") came,' and Nostradamus relates that Peire found such favour with the ladies as to enjoy the privilege of kissing the fairest amongst his audience after each *canzo* he had sung.

Such is the model the Monk of Montaudon has chosen, and it must be owned that the disciple is worthy of the master. The monk's acquaintance with the most intimate details of his rivals' biographies would do credit to a modern interviewer. 'As Peire of Alvernhe,' he begins, 'has sung about the troubadours of past days, I am going to do the same for those that have come since, and I hope they won't be angry with me for exposing their evil doings.' And then he sallies forth on his crusade of abuse, devoting with laudible equality the space of six verses to each victim, 'a character dead at every stanza,' as Sir Peter Teazle would say. The reader will be glad to hear that no mercy is shown to Peire of Alvernhe. 'He wears his coat these thirty years,' we are told. 'He is as lean as firewood, and his singing is getting worse and worse. Since he has joined company with a lewd woman at Clermont, he has not made a single good song.' 'Arnaut Daniel (Petrarch's "great master of love") has never in his life written anything tolerable, but only composed stuff which nobody can understand.'

Folquet of Marseilles, whose conversion from a gay troubadour to a religious zealot has been briefly mentioned before, is reminded that his father was a pedlar. 'He swore a foolish oath when he said he would write no more songs, and it has been said that he consciously perjured himself.'

But the most piercing darts of his quiver the monk reserves for a troubadour whose immeasurable vanity, almost bordering on madness, was indeed a tempting mark for the satirist. I am speaking of Peire Vidal, of whose life and works and follies the reader has had a full account. Only a few leading points need here be recapitulated.

He was the son of a furrier, but had forgotten and made others forget his low origin. He believed himself to be an irresistible breaker of hearts, and had to pay dearly for his vain boasting of favours never granted. For a jealous husband, whose wife the Peire counted amongst his victims, had the poet's tongue pierced, which, however, did not prevent the incorrigible braggart from continuing to call himself the dread of husbands, 'who fear me worse than fire or pointed iron, God be thanked.' At one time he took part in a crusade, and married a Greek lady at Cyprus, with whom he returned home. For some reason or other he imagined his wife to be the niece of the Greek Emperor, and, as her husband, claimed a right to the imperial throne. In the meantime he adopted the style and title of an Emperor, and even thought of equipping a fleet to enforce his right to the throne. His follies naturally

excited universal merriment, and we need not wonder at finding the Monk amongst the foremost of the scoffers. 'Peire Vidal,' he exclaims, 'is one of the very last of poets. He has not got all his limbs, and a tongue of silver would be desirable for him. Once he was a miserable furrier, but since he has dubbed himself a knight he has lost his last remnant of wits.'

In this strain the monk continues through fifteen stanzas, scattering abuse broadcast, and if his wit sometimes seems to desert him, it must, at least, be owned that his spite is genuine and unflagging. But in his case also the manuscripts contain an additional stanza of retributive justice, most likely by a later copyist. 'With the sixteenth stanza,' it says, 'the false Monk of Montaudon will be satisfied, he who quarrels and fights with every one. He has deserted God for a flitch of bacon, and for his ever attempting to write *canzos* and verses he ought to be hung up in the wind.'

Such was literary criticism amongst the troubadours—a not very edifying spectacle, upon which, the reader perhaps may think, too many words have been wasted already. So we will drop the curtain on the Monk of Montaudon, not without a good-natured smile at his weaknesses, nor without wonderment at an age which burnt and quartered thousands of virtuous Albigeois, and tolerated, or even approved of, such doings and such utterances in a monk.

But, before leaving the subject finally, I must

warn the reader not to judge the general tone of the Provençal *sirventes* by the few examples of personal satire here specified. The troubadours grow, as Schiller says, with their greater purpose. In reproving the moral evils of their time, the decay of piety, the avarice of the great, the outrages of clerical pride, they frequently attain to an almost Dantesque power of conception and imagery. I know of few grander ideas in poetry than Marcabrun's picture of the enormous tree, whose branches mingle with the clouds, whose roots spread down to mid-earth. To it are tied innumerable multitudes of all classes, from king to beggar. For the tree is the eternal evil of the world, and avarice and covetousness are the bonds which fetter mankind.

But such objective depth of idea must not be expected from the Monk of Montaudon. He is a broadly humorous figure, and although characteristic in many ways of his time and country, he must not blind us to the serious currents of thought moving the age in which he lived, and the literature of which he represents one feature. We must look at him as one of those burlesque types by which the terrible seriousness of man's life and thoughts is fortunately relieved at intervals—a product of nature's creative humour in one of her most whimsical moods.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE REFORMATION OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

THE great struggle for religious liberty, which began with Huss and Wycliffe, culminated in the age of Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer, and continues to pervade modern thought and feeling, is apt to blind us to earlier movements in the same direction. The sixteenth century is so inseparably linked with our ideas of the Reformation, that to connect the word with a previous epoch seems almost like a paradox. But the intellectual night of the middle ages was not quite as dark as modern Protestant pride is apt to fancy, neither did nations and individuals bow without resistance to the yoke of Rome. The thirteenth century especially may be justly described as an epoch of religious revolution. Heresy raised its multifarious heads in all countries of Europe, from the Danubian principalities to the English shores of the Atlantic. Everywhere the vices of the clergy were laid bare with merciless satire, in many places the cry for liberty of thought and doctrine was raised, and the translation of the Bible into the language of the people is frequently found amongst the demands of heterodox theologians.

And whatever the dissensions amongst the various sects might be, they were united in their hatred and opposition to the Church of Rome.

This alarming circumstance was fully realised by the man to whose energy the resistance and final victory of Papal supremacy were in a great measure due, Pope Innocent III. Speaking of the various classes of heretics, he says: 'Species quidem habentes diversas, sed caudas ad invicem colligatas. . . . Magisterium Ecclesiae Romanae refugiunt.' As to the extraordinary knowledge of the Bible amongst some of the sects, another unimpeachable witness may be cited,—Reinerius, a Catholic convert and violent assailant of the Waldenses, who professes to have known a common peasant able to recite the whole of the book of Job, and several others who knew the New Testament by heart. It was not without reason, the reader will perceive, that about this time the Church became more and more anxious to wrench such a dangerous source of dissent and argumentation from the hands of the common people. Hence the notion, frequently insisted upon in ecclesiastical writings of the period, of the Bible being a book of unfathomable depth, all but incomprehensible to the greatest scholars, and useless, if not dangerous, to the vulgar.

No country in those days offered a more favourable soil to the growth of heresy than the south of France. Its wealth, its practical independence from the central power of the French kings, and the natural spirit of its inhabitants, had fostered a degree

of local freedom all but unequalled in other parts of feudal Europe. Particularly the citizens of the large towns showed a remarkable spirit of pride and political ambition. As early as the thirteenth century, we hear of a legally constituted '*tiers état*,' consisting of delegates of the towns, at the provincial assemblies of the county of Toulouse. A population of this kind was not likely to bow in silent awe to a priesthood, the vices and weaknesses of which were notorious, and formed a favourite butt for the satire of the troubadours. The step from antagonism to the representatives of the Roman Church to the rejection of its doctrine was easy, and hence we are not surprised to see the south of France described as the brood-nest of foulest heresy; nay, even the Provençal language, or *langue d'oc*, was harsh and repulsive to orthodox ears, and, as was mentioned before, Pope Innocent IV., in a bull dated 1245, forbade its use to the students.

The chief sect existing in the county of Toulouse and its dependencies derived its name from the town or diocese of Albi. But it must be remembered that Albigenses, or, in its French form, Albigeois, is a collective name used by the Catholics almost synonymously with heretics, and without regard to the most important doctrinal and moral variations. The Vaudois or Waldenses, for instance, although frequently mixed up with the Albigenses, seem to have had little in common with them beyond their opposition to Roman supremacy.[1] My task

[1] Owing to the noble protection granted to the remnants of

being a purely literary consideration of the subject, I must deal with the Albigeois doctrine in the briefest fashion. Our knowledge of that doctrine is, moreover, anything but satisfactory or complete, being mainly derived from the statements of Catholic controversialists, the confessions of heretics preserved amongst the documents of the Inquisition, and the

the old Waldenses in the valleys of the Cottonian Alps by Cromwell, and continued by subsequent English governments, till the full emancipation of the sect by King Charles Albert in 1848, their history and doctrines have excited a great deal of interest in this country. A rich and valuable literature on the subject exists in our language, disfigured only by the desire, on the part of theologians, to absolutely identify the original doctrine of the Vaudois with that of the Protestant reformers. This kind of retrospective propagandism may have been useful in the days of the Commonwealth to raise Puritan sympathy for oppressed fellow Protestants, but surely is out of place in our critical times. The works by Blair, Faber, Gilly, Allix, and others are well known. The reader's attention is called to an interesting volume by Dr. Todd, containing a description of the Waldensian manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, also reprints of articles by the late Hon. Algernon Herbert, Dr. Gilly, and other authors, on the Waldenses and their representative poem, the 'Noble Lesson.' Here also will be found a curious account of the re-discovery of certain interesting MSS., brought over to England by Morland, Cromwell's envoy to the Duke of Savoy, and deposited by him in the library of Cambridge University. They were long supposed to have disappeared, but were ultimately found by Mr. H. Bradshaw, the accomplished scholar, in 1862, on the identical shelf where Morland had deposited them. The possibility of this strange neglect Mr. Bradshaw explains from the fact that 'the history of the MSS. was lost sight of, and they had come to be regarded as miscellaneous pieces, *apparently in Spanish.*' The italicised suggestion reveals a beautiful development of modern philology at Cambridge. Does that state of things continue at the present day? What reason is there to believe the contrary, or what chance of improvement?

decrees of councils and provincial synods. The fanaticism of mediæval monks seems to have been fatal to the utterances of their adversaries. We do not indeed possess a single authentic document from an Albigeois source, and the celebrated embodiment of the Vaudois creed, called 'The Noble Lesson,' which Raynouard dated from the eleventh century, is now generally acknowledged to belong to a much later period, when the sect was cooped up in its Alpine recesses, and had lost its real importance and vitality. It seems at any rate doubtful whether this curious document contains the pure doctrine of the original 'Poor Men of Lyons.'

From such sources as those indicated above, it may be concluded with tolerable certainty that the Albigenses were part of that great new-Manichean heresy, which, taking its rise amongst the Slav populations of the Balkan peninsula, gradually spread over almost every part of Western Europe, leaving traces of its name and aspirations in more than one modern language. The self-laudatory term of Cathari (from the Greek word καθαρός, pure) assumed by some of the heretics, was converted by the Germans into the generic term of 'Ketzer,' or heretic; and the Italian word 'bugiardo,' liar, is a lasting testimony of the repute in which Bulgarian veracity, deservedly or undeservedly, was held; not to mention other still more opprobrious epithets derived from the same root.

In common with other new-Manichean sects, the Albigenses seem to have rejected a Trinity, and to

have placed in its stead a dualism of creative principles: one good, the other evil; one representing the invisible and spiritual, the other the physical and tangible. More obnoxious perhaps than this merely speculative attempt at the solution of an old metaphysical problem must have been, in the eyes of Romish priests, those doctrines which more immediately clashed with Papal dogmas and rites. To these belong the abolishment of mass and sacraments, and of the veneration of the saints. The idea of transubstantiation the Albigenses treated with scorn, and, moreover, they founded this and other heterodox opinions on the exclusive authority of the Bible, or rather of the New Testament, for against the Hebrew books they had a strange prejudice. The spiritual tinge of their doctrine made them adverse to marriage or any form of sexual intercourse, from which indeed the initiated abstained totally. From a similar point of view we have to explain another of their moral precepts, viz., vegetarianism, founded not on the nature-worship of Buddhism, or on Shelley's humanitarian enthusiasm, but on the abhorrence of the flesh and everything procreated by the flesh. For the same reason the prohibition did not extend to fish.

It is less apparent on what grounds they insisted upon another demand of modern philanthropists, the abolition of capital punishment. And it is not unlikely that our admiration of this almost unique instance of humanity in those cruel times would be considerably diminished by our knowledge of its

motive. Most probably some absurd theological crotchet was at the bottom of it. For in that respect mediæval heretics were by no means in advance of their Catholic contemporaries. One of the questions, for instance, hotly discussed by Pope Innocent III. and the heretics, was, whether the number of nails used at the Crucifixion was three or four. The heretics inclined to the lower figure, and were soundly rated for that reason by a learned controversialist, who denounces their doctrine as unworthy of Catholics and Christians.

The charges of all manner of vices raised against the Albigeois by monkish chroniclers ought naturally to be received with great caution. Sometimes even these bear unwilling testimony to the general purity of their manners. It is said that on one occasion Folquet, the fanatical Bishop of Toulouse, asked a knight recently converted to Catholicism, why he and his friends did not drive the heretics from the country. 'It is impossible,' was the answer; 'we have grown up amongst them, our friends and relations are of them, and we know that they lead honest lives.' It is, however, by no means improbable that the exaggerated asceticism of their moral code frequently led to secret vice and hypocrisy.

The anecdote just related may at the same time give the reader an idea of the power and extension of the Provençal heresy, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, the period which chiefly concerns us here. It proves, and we know from other sources,

that the sect was by no means limited to the lower orders. We hear, for instance, of a great teacher of the Albigeois, by name Guillabert de Castres, who had many followers amongst the highest nobility of Southern France. At one of his religious meetings, in 1204, he received amongst his flock five high-born ladies, one of them the sister of Count Raimon Roger of Foix, one of the most powerful lords of the country, of whom we shall hear again. The ladies, the old account runs, surrendered themselves to God and the Gospel. They consented to abstain from flesh, eggs, and cheese; the use of oil and fish, on the other hand, was conceded to them. They also promised never to take an oath nor to speak an untruth. Vows of perfect chastity, and of adherence to their creed at the risk of their lives, were further conditions of their reception amongst the faithful. The Count of Foix, and many knights and citizens, are said to have witnessed this conversion, and there is little doubt that the former himself followed, or perhaps had preceded, his sister's example. But the same is not by any means certain of Raimon VI., Count of Toulouse, the champion of the national and religious freedom of Southern France. There is little evidence with regard to him of even an inclination towards the doctrinal views of the heretics, and he died a faithful son of the Catholic Church, although she refused him her comfortings in his last hours, and a grave after death. But it is just this orthodoxy of his dogmatical opinions which makes his position in the struggle so interesting. He is an

almost unique instance in the middle ages of a strict adherent, nay a martyr, to religious toleration.

Raimon VI. was not, like his friend the Count of Foix, a fighting baron in the ordinary sense. His personal courage on the battle-field was unimpeachable, but he did not love the fight for the fight's sake. When the spreading of the heresy in his territories, fostered by his leniency, first began to alarm the watchfulness of Rome, he did everything in his power to avoid the thunders of the Church. Many were the penances and humiliations and promises of amendment to which he submitted without much personal reluctance, it would seem. But all attempts at a final reconciliation were frustrated by his one unalterable resolve, not to give over his subjects to the tender mercies of the Inquisition. Their safety and freedom were to him dearer than his lands and castles, more sacred even than the vows extracted from him under compulsion. Much fault may be found with Raimon's general conduct in these transactions; even in his noble principle of toleration he may have been influenced by the ties of relationship and other personal motives. But the fact remains, that at a time when heretics were treated worse than robbers and murderers, a great prince struggled and fought, at the risk of his life and property, for the religious freedom of his subjects, whose belief he did *not* share.

Raimon's great antagonist—intellectually, and perhaps morally, infinitely his superior—was Pope Innocent III. He is one of those characters in

history which leave their impress on periods of which they at the same time represent the highest development in one direction or another. Without him the Church of Rome might have succumbed to the aggressions of temporal and spiritual enemies, but neither would he have been possible except as the representative of a great spiritual power, full of latent vitality, and with a strong hold on the minds of the people. The one great idea of his life was the consolidation and enlargement of the Church, with regard to its dogma, its discipline, and its political power. To this aim he devoted the energy of his mind and the great stores of his acquired knowledge; to it he sacrificed his personal interests, perhaps his conscience. For, even accepting his own standard of duty, it is difficult to justify at least the one act of his reign which concerns us most immediately. This is, the diverting of the enthusiasm which found its tangible result in the Crusades, from the Turk, the common enemy of Christianity, to a comparatively harmless sect in his more immediate neighbourhood. I am alluding to the celebrated crusade preached by him against the Provençal heretics, fatal alike to the political freedom and to the independent literature of Southern France.

When Innocent, in 1198, at the early age of thirty-seven, ascended the chair of St. Peter, one of his first desires was to impart new life to the hitherto somewhat sluggish action against the Albigenses. The bishops of the threatened dioceses were admonished to take immediate and energetic measures,

and a number of Papal legates were successively despatched to stem the current of heresy by preaching, personal persuasion, and, if need be, severe repression. Amongst the priests most devoted to the cause of Rome, and most fanatical in their orthodox zeal, two names stand out prominently—that of Folquet, Bishop of Toulouse, once a gay troubadour, now an ascetic; and that of St. Dominic, branded by history as the originator of the Inquisition.

Count Raimon's attitude in the meantime seems to have been one of diplomatic evasion. When taken to task for his notorious connivance at the heretical movement, he meekly confessed his guilt, and promised the immediate expulsion of the culprits from his dominions. But no result followed; not even after the severest punishment of the Church, the Interdict, had been twice inflicted on him and his subjects. The instrument of the Papal wrath on the second occasion was Pierre de Castelnau, the legate; and his death at the hands of two unknown assassins, with which Count Raimon was charged, is the tragic close of the first scene of the Albigeois drama.

This event gave new zest to the extreme measure resolved upon by the Pope shortly before—the preaching of a crusade against the heretics and their protector. The political wisdom of such a measure is at once apparent, and fully accounts for its ultimate success. The fertile valleys and wealthy cities of Provence offered a tempting bait to

pious plunderers, who at the same time avoided a wearisome and dangerous journey to the far East without losing any of the spiritual privileges connected with the more onerous task. Moreover, the Papal mandate was chiefly addressed to the ruler and the nobles of the French kingdom, who for a long time had looked with a covetous eye on the broad acres and rich vineyards of their southern neighbours.

The year 1209 marks the opening of the first crusade. The legates of the Pope guided the sacred army. Amongst the worldly leaders, the name of Simon de Montfort, father of the celebrated Earl of Leicester, is the most prominent. The incidents of this war, which lasted over twenty years, and laid waste the most flourishing provinces of France, are matter of history. Suffice it here to allude briefly to the revolting cruelties of the crusaders, and to such memorable events as the sieges of Lavaur and Beziers, and the decisive battle of Muret, at which Peter II. of Aragon, the brother-in-law and ally of Count Raimon, perished with the flower of his chivalry. It was at the sack of Beziers that that man of God, Arnaud, Abbot of Citeaux, when asked by the soldiers how to distinguish Catholics and heretics, spoke the pious words: 'Kill them all; the Lord will know his own!'

In the end, the Church remained triumphant. Raimon died with a broken heart and a broken fortune. His valour in the field of battle had been in vain; even his most humiliating attempts at

reconciliation with the Roman See had come to naught, owing, in great part, to the personal hatred of the legates and local clergy, who, out-heroding Herod, frustrated the milder intentions of the Pope. It ought to be added, in alleviation of the guilt of the priests, that religious intolerance was supported in this case by worldly ambition and covetousness. The crusade soon took the form of a political war between the North and the South of France; it was a struggle of provincial autonomy against centralisation. This issue also was gained by the invaders. As early as 1215, the lands of the Count of Toulouse were by the Pope given to his champion, Simon de Montfort, who, it is true, never enjoyed their quiet possession, and died in the defence of his ill-gotten title. By his eldest son, Amaury, these claims were ceded to the King of France, who in the meantime had taken a prominent part in the crusade. In the final peace concluded with the crown of France at Paris, in 1229, Count Raimon VII., son of Raimon VI, barely succeeded in retaining possession of the scanty remains of his heritage during his own lifetime. His daughter and heiress was married to the brother of the King of France. This marriage sealed the doom of southern independence; its customs, its traditions, and its literature were rapidly merged in the overpowering influence of northern centralisation. The *langue d'oc* descended to the level of a local patois.

It is sad to relate that the last recorded action of Raimon VII. was his personal attendance at the conviction and burning alive of eighty heretics. With

the Treaty of Paris, the last hope of the Albigeois movement had vanished, and its remnants were gradually hunted down by the bloodhounds of the Inquisition, now an established institution in beautiful Provence.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE EPIC OF THE CRUSADE.

On the tombstone of Count Raimon VI. the following two lines, in Provençal, were engraved :—

> Non y a homes sus terra, per gran senhor que fos,
> Quem gites de ma terra, si la glieza non fos;

that is—'No man on earth, how great a lord he may be, can drive me from my land but for the Church.' These lines are taken from a narrative of the crusade against the Albigenses, in the *langue d'oc*—a work equally interesting as a contemporary source of history, and as a literary document. In the latter respect alone it concerns us here, and the reader is asked to consider the preceding historic remarks mainly as a necessary elucidation of the following extracts. A few dates as to the genesis and character of the poem itself may perhaps be welcome.

The 'Song of the Crusade against the Albigeois' is evidently written by an eye-witness of many of the events described, and was, no doubt, at its first appearance, what we should call a most successful book. Its popularity is proved by the quotation already alluded to, as also by the fact that at an early

date an abridgment of its contents in prose, for more popular use, was found necessary. In spite of this, only one manuscript[1] of the poem has reached our time. It was edited amongst the 'Documents inédits sur l'histoire de France,' by the well-known scholar, M. Fauriel, in 1837. The author of the poem is by no means reticent as to his identity or merits. 'In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' he opens his poem, after the manner of his time, 'here begins the song which Master W(illiam) made; a clerk who was brought up at Tudela, in Navarra. He is wise and valorous, as the story says, and he was much cherished by clerks and laymen. Counts and viscounts loved him, and trusted his advice, owing to the destruction which he knew and foresaw by means of geomancy, which he had studied long. And he knew that the country would be burnt and laid waste, because of the foolish belief it had adopted.'

But in spite of this emphatic declaration, M. Fauriel saw reason to call in question not only the authorship, but the very existence of the wise clerk of Tudela. The pretension of proficiency in the black art boldly put forward, seemed to him a suspicious circumstance, and his doubt was confirmed by linguistic difficulties, into which we cannot enter here. These latter, however, have been conclusively

[1] The great value of this MS., which is on parchment, and in perfect condition, is proved by a curious endorsement on the last page, dated 1336, to the effect that one Jordan Capella obtained on it a loan of fifteen '*livres tournois*,' by no means an inconsiderable sum in those days.

solved by more recent scholars, and William's po
humous fame would be securely established, but f
another circumstance fatal to at least part of h
claim. Fauriel already had pointed out that aft
about the first third of the poem—at verse 27
later scholars have determined—a sudden chan
takes place in the author's opinions. Hitherto h
has been a warm defender of the crusaders; th
French invaders are called 'our French barons,' ar
the author would be thankful to any one 'who wou
hang those robbers and villains who kill the cr
saders.' Folquet, the zealous Bishop of Toulous
seems to him to have 'no equal in kindnes
('degus de bontat ab el no s'aparelha'); and Simc
de Montfort, the great enemy of Provence, is d
scribed as a 'good cavalier, liberal and brave an
kindly, sweet-tempered and open-hearted, and
good understanding.' The heretical creed the autho
calls, as has been said, a 'fola crezensa,' and the fu
measure of his wrath is emptied on its adherent
He complacently relates the cruelties committe
against them, and objects only to the indiscrim
nate slaughter of innocent and guilty.

But all this is changed in the second portion
the poem. The French have now become 'hom
cides' and 'men of the sword;' sometimes even th
uncomplimentary epithet of 'taverners,' or pothous
keepers, is applied to them. Folquet is summaril
alluded to as the 'avesque felon,' or 'wicke
bishop;' and the Pope himself is reproached wit
his cruelty to Raimon. But the most striking cor

trast between the two portions of the poem becomes apparent in the judgment of Simon de Montfort's character. The author's hatred against him in the second part vents itself in bitterest invective, and is not appeased by death itself. The description of the great leader's fall in our poem is extremely vivid; it is painted with the colours of hatred. At the same time the triumph at the enemy's fall bears involuntary witness to his greatness. Simon is besieging Toulouse, the rebellious capital of the dominions lately granted to him by the Pope, and the author describes an assault made by the crusaders, and valiantly repelled by the inhabitants. Montfort, incensed at the little progress made by his troops, is complaining to his brother, who has just been hit by an arrow. There was in the city, the author continues, a machine for throwing stones, worked by women, both girls and matrons. A stone is thrown, and goes 'straight where it ought to go.' This 'ought to go' is an admirable trait of the fatalism of hatred. 'It hits,' the author continues, evidently gloating over the details, 'Count Simon on his helmet, with such force that his eyes and brain, and the top of his head, and his forehead, and his jaws, are knocked to pieces. And the Count falls to the ground, dead, and bleeding, and black.'

The terror and grief caused by this sudden event amongst the crusaders are then briefly alluded to, but the author is again in his element when he describes the unbounded joy of the besieged, fully shared by himself. The suggestions of making a

martyr and saint of Simon, in his epitaph, the author treats with the utmost scorn. 'If by killing men,' he says, 'and shedding blood, by destroying souls and consenting to murder, by trusting in false counsels and by incendiarism, by ruining the barons and shaming nobility, by fostering evil and crushing good, by the massacre of women and children, one can gain Jesus Christ in this world, then Simon must wear a crown and shine in heaven.'

It is difficult to believe that the same hand which thus heaped shame on Simon's grave should have penned the eulogistic lines of the first part of the poem, particularly if one considers that the change of opinion from the particular point formerly alluded to coincides with certain metrical and dialectical variations totally overlooked by Fauriel, but since pointed out by M. Paul Meyer. The theory of there being only one author, however, has by no means been totally abandoned. Its champions explain the revolution in the poet's feeling partly from the impression made on him by the cruelties of the invaders, partly from a change in his situation during the interval of several years, which undoubtedly lies between the end of the first and the commencement of the second part of his work. Into the philological details of this interesting controversy this is not the place to enter. Suffice it to say that, all things considered, the dualistic supposition seems to be decidedly the more probable of the two, both on external and internal grounds.

One or two specimens from the interesting poem

must serve the reader to judge of the poetic gift of William, or whoever the author or authors may have been. It has already been said that in his dealings with Count Raimon the conduct of Innocent III. himself was marked by greater leniency than that of his legates. This feature in the Pope's character has suggested to our author a most curious scene, which he introduces into his elaborate account of the Council of the Lateran in 1215. Raimon of Toulouse, the Count of Foix, and several others of the threatened nobles of Provence, attended personally to plead their cause before the Holy Father. The legates and many of the local clergy of the south of France—the implacable Folquet, Bishop of Toulouse, foremost amongst them—upheld the claims of Simon de Montfort. A long and passionate dispute on the subject between the Count of Foix and the Bishop of Toulouse is given verbatim. The Pope tries to quiet them. 'Friends, justice shall be done,' he exclaims. At last he retires for a few minutes to his orchard. But the zealous prelates will not let him rest. The Pope asks for a few minutes of reflection. He opens a book, and concludes from the passage that first meets his eye that the Count of Toulouse may yet hold his own. 'My lords,' he says to the prelates, 'I cannot agree with you. How can I disinherit the Count, who is a true Catholic?' But the prelates do not, it appears, believe in book messages. They clamour against the sentence, and Folquet, the most dangerous of all, unites his sweet persuasion with their violent remon-

strance. The Archbishop of Auch and—awful to relate—three hundred cardinals follow suit. No wonder that the poor Pope at last grants the decree in Simon's favour. 'My lords,' he finally exclaims, 'the cause is decided. The Count (Raimon) is a Catholic, and of loyal conduct; but let Simon hold the lands.'

These speeches cannot be accepted in their literal meaning, any more than those found in the pages of Xenophon or Thucydides. The circumstance also of the Pope deciding clearly and confessedly against his own conscience is evidently the high-coloured statement of a partisan of the oppressed Count. (The scene, it must be remembered, occurs in the second and anti-clerical division of the poem.) But the incidents are related with so much freshness of individual characterisation that the author's intimate acquaintance with the persons and events described cannot be doubted for a moment. At any rate it is a quaint picture, and not without historic significance, to see the great Pontiff, the breaker of thrones and the umpire of nations, quailing under the storm of fanaticism raised by himself. Moreover, the idea which suggested the situation to the poet is not without its grain of sober truth. For, as has already been said, it is an historic fact that Innocent III. on several occasions showed an unfortunately abortive desire to protect Raimon against the unfettered rage of legates and monks.

From the council-chamber we follow our author to the battle-field. Here, also, he is perfectly at

home, and his descriptions, although naturally less attractive as regards psychological observation, are none the less vigorous and interesting. There is the true ring of the 'chanson de geste,' the genuine popular epic, in his lines. A few historic remarks must precede our quotation. The reader will remember the name of Peter II., the valiant king of Aragon, whose sister was the wife of Raimon of Toulouse. Although by no means favourably inclined towards the heretics, Peter could not calmly look on while his brother-in-law was despoiled of his heritage. His attempts at mediation between Raimon and Simon de Montfort were many. He appealed to the Pope and the King of France. At last, when his peaceful efforts proved in vain, he resolved to brave temporal and eternal perils rather than forsake his friend. He assembled a large army, and in September 1213 joined his forces with those of the Count of Toulouse. The immediate object of the allies was the siege of Muret, a small fortified town, not far from Toulouse, into which Simon had thrown himself. I now leave the word to the old chronicler.

'The good King of Aragon, on his good charger, is come to Muret, and has raised his banner and laid siege to the town with many rich vassals whom he has called from their fiefs. He has brought with him the flower of Catalonia, and many great knights from Aragon. They think that no one will offer resistance to them, or dare to attack them. He sends a message to the husband of his sister at

Toulouse to join him with his barons and his army and his warlike men. He (the king) is ready to restore their fiefs to the Count of Cominges and all his relations; after that he will go to Beziers, and from Montpelier to Rocamador he will not leave a single crusader in castle or tower. All shall die a miserable death. The brave Count, when he hears the message, is well pleased, and goes straight to the Capitol.'

The next tirade [1] relates to the deliberations of the Count of Toulouse with the chief magistrates of his city, whom, in accordance with the freedom enjoyed by the burgesses of Provence, he has to consult on this important occasion. It further describes the departure of the army, and winds up with a truly epical prognostication of their tragic fate. 'They arrive before Muret, where they were to lose all their own; so much beautiful armour and so many valiant men. Great pity it was, so help me God, and the whole world felt the loss.'

'The whole world felt the loss, believe me I speak truth. Paradise itself was shaken and damaged and all Christendom shamed and downcast. But listen, sirs, how the thing came to pass. Assembled are at Muret the good King of Aragon and the

[1] The poem is written in tirades, or paragraphs of varying lengths, bound together by the same rhyme. At the end of each tirade there is a short line which, in the second portion of the poem, is, as a rule, literally repeated in the first line of the following tirade, while in the first part it only anticipates its rhyme. This difference is the chief metrical evidence against the one-author theory.

Count of St. Giles, with his barons, and all the citizens and commonalty of Toulouse. They mount their stone-throwing machines, and batter the walls of Muret on all sides. They enter the new town all together, and the French who are there are so hard pressed that they have all to seek shelter in the castle. At once a messenger is sent to the king. "Sir King of Aragon, know for true that the men of Toulouse have done so well that, by your leave, they have taken the city. They have destroyed the houses, and driven the French into the castle." When the king hears this he is not well pleased. He goes to the consuls of Toulouse and admonishes them to leave the men of Muret in peace. "We should be foolish," he says, "in taking the town, for I have had a letter—a sealed message—to say that Simon de Montfort will to-morrow enter the town, and when he is once enclosed in it, and when my cousin Nunos has arrived, we will attack the town on all sides, and take all the French and crusaders captive."'

The troops vacate Muret accordingly, and retire to their tents. They have hardly sat down to dinner when Simon, with a band of chosen knights, appears and at once enters the city. 'The river was shining with their helmets and their blades as if it were made of crystal. Never, by St. Martial, were so many brave vassals seen among so small a band.'

The night is passed by the two armies in preparations for the morrow's combat. Disagreement reigns in the camp of the allies. In the council

of war the Count of Toulouse, who does not wish to risk a pitched battle with his army of citizens, and advises the fortification of the camp, is cried down by hot-headed fools, and no plan is finally agreed upon. The confusion of the leaders naturally grows worse confounded amongst the motley crowd of soldiers and ill-trained citizens. Simon de Montfort's scheme, on the other hand, is devised with masterly skill. He desires what Count Raimon tries to avoid —a pitched battle in the open country. Bishop Folquet gives his blessing to the departing army. The catastrophe foreshadowed in the manner alluded to is told briefly, in accordance with the rapidity of the actual disaster.

'They (the French) march straight to the tents across the fens, their banners floating in the air. The whole meadow is resplendent with their gilt armour. When the good King of Aragon sees them he awaits them with a small number of followers. But the people of Toulouse come running by. They listen neither to king nor count. They never hear a word till the French are come, who all rush to where they know the king to be. He cries out, "I am the king," but they hear him not, and so cruelly is he wounded, that his blood is shed over the land, and there he fell down, at full length, dead. The others who behold him give themselves over for lost. Every one flies. No one defends himself. The French follow at their heels and kill them all. And so roughly have they handled them that those who escape with their lives think themselves delivered

indeed.' A general stampede of the men of Toulouse, who had remained in the camp, and many of whom are now drowned in the swollen waves of the Garonne, forms the closing scene of this wild battle piece. 'All their goods,' the poet once more complains, 'remained in the camp, and the loss was greatly felt all the world over. For many a man there remained lying on the ground quite dead. Great is the pity!'

Such is the description of the battle of Muret by a contemporary, most likely an eye-witness. For here again the characters of the different leaders, their speeches, and their demeanour, are sketched with a boldness of individualisation which can have been derived from personal knowledge alone. As a historic source, the work under discussion is absolutely invaluable. English students especially ought to give it every attention. For the struggle which it describes involved questions of the utmost importance to the continental dependencies of the English crown.

It ought to be added, that the battle of Muret was a fatal blow to Raimon's cause, from which it never recovered. For years he continued the fight; but it was a struggle against fate, a hope against hope. A different issue of that day might have changed the development of France. It might also have given new and lasting vitality to the Reformation of the thirteenth century.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FOLQUET OF MARSEILLES.

THE question remains to be asked,—which side did the troubadours take in this struggle? Did they prove themselves to be men of mettle in a contest in which their own literary existence was at stake no less than the freedom of their country? Both these questions can, with a very few exceptions, be answered in their favour; as a class, they stood to the cause of their natural friend and protector; and it must be remembered that that cause at the time was identical with religious toleration and opposition to the tyranny of Rome. With the theological side of the contest the troubadours, however, did not concern themselves much; it was their duty and joy to lash the vices of the priests with their satire, and to defend their country and their beautiful language against French intrusion; the subtleties of dualism and doketism they wisely avoided. It is true that the great Peire Cardinal once ventured to speak on the mooted point of purgatory and eternal punishment; but we shall presently see how untheological, or, which is the same, how purely human, was his interest in the subject. It seems, indeed, doubtful

whether many of the troubadours espoused the opinions of their Albigeois countrymen. Of some of the fiercest antagonists of the priests we know the contrary, and of one troubadour only, Aimeric de Pegulhan, we are told parenthetically that he died in Italy, 'en eretgia segon c'om ditz'—'a heretic, as people say.'

Of the few troubadours prominently mentioned on the side of the Pope, one, Uc de St. Cyr, lived chiefly in Italy; another, Perdigon, had to pay dearly for his apostasy. When, after the battle of Muret, he rejoiced in the misfortune of his benefactor, the noble Peter of Aragon, society seems to have laid its interdict on him, and he had to hide his shame in a convent, where he died. Of much greater importance than either is the celebrated Folquet of Marseilles, whose name, as Bishop of Toulouse, and as one of the most zealous persecutors of his heretical countrymen, has more than once been mentioned in these pages. The life and character of this man are a psychological problem of deepest interest; his career was varied and inconsistent in itself—so inconsistent that the identity of troubadour and bishop has been doubted. But there is no reason for such a doubt, historical or psychological, as we shall presently see.

The birthplace of Folquet cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty. Most likely he was a native of Marseilles, where his father possessed a large amount of property. It had been acquired by mercantile pursuits, continued for a time

by the poet himself after his father's death, if we may believe an allusion in the Monk of Montaudon's satire. Folquet, however, did not follow his father's calling for long. He lived amongst the gay and fashionable at the courts of the great nobles, where his graceful bearing and his poetical gift made him a welcome guest. One of his protectors was Barral, Viscount of Marseilles, and it was his wife, Azalais, who became the poet's idol, and may be regarded as the final aim and cause of all his further thoughts and deeds; including his ultimate conversion, I do not hesitate to add. Their intercourse was not one of the conventional flirtations so common between troubadours and high-born ladies. Neither was it a mutual and guilty passion, such as existed between Guillem de Cabestanh and Margarida. The old biographer lays particular stress on the fact, that 'neither by his prayers nor by his songs could he ever move her to show him favour by right of love'; and for that reason he always complains of love in his songs.'

These songs fully bear out the statement of the manuscript. Their one almost incessant theme is love's disappointment. But this theme Folquet treats like an artist. He avoids monotony by an ever new array of striking similes and allegories in which he clothes his longing. What, for instance, can indicate the hesitation of a timorous though passionate lover better than the image of a man who has reached the middle of a tree, and does not ascend further or regain the earth, for fear of losing his chance or his life? Two stanzas of the poem in

which it occurs may follow here in the original. They are full of sweetness, and will not offer serious difficulties to the reader, if he will consult the subjoined translation, which I have tried to make as literal as possible. The graceful intertwining of the rhymes bears witness to Folquet's consummate workmanship, and deserves the attention of modern poets.

CANZOS.

S'al cor plagues ben for' ueimais sazos
De far canson per joia mantener;
Mas tan mi fai m'aventura doler,—
Quan bem cossir los bes els mals qu'ieu ai—
Que tug dizon que ricx sui e bem vai.
Mas cel qu'o ditz non sap ges ben lo ver:
Benenansa non pot negus aver
D'aquela re, mas d'aquo qu'al cor plai.
Per que n'a mais us paubres s'es joyos
Q'us ricx ses joy, qu'es tot l'an cossiros.

E s'ieu anc jorn fui gays ni amoros,
Er non ai joy d'amor ni non l'esper;
Ni autres bes nom pot al cor plazer,
Ans mi semblan tug autre joy esmai.
Pero d'amor lo ver vos en dirai:
Nom lais del tot ni no m'en puesc mover
Ni sus no vau, ni no puesc remaner;
Aissi cum sel qu'en mieg de l'arbr'estai,
Qu'es tan poiatz que non pot tornar jcs
Ni sus no vai, tan li par temeros.

*Translation.*

But for my heart, this would the season be
To sing of love and joy a joyous song;
But grievously I suffer from the wrong,—
Seeing the good and evil of my case—
Which all men do me when my fate they praise;
Who speaks suchwise is of the foolish throng,
Who know not that the joys of life belong

To none but who receives them with good grace.
Wherefore a joyous heart in poverty
Is better far than wealth and misery.

Maybe I once was happy for a space,
But joy and hope of love have passed away;
No other good can make me blithe and gay,
For all the world I hold in dire disdain.
Of love the full truth let me now explain:
I cannot leave it, nor yet on my way
Pass back or forward, neither can I stay;
Like one who mounts a tree mid-high, and fain
Would mount still higher, or downward move apace,
But fear and tremor bind him in his place.

His father's wealth, it is evident, was of little use to poor Folquet, and we can quite understand his chafing at the folly of men who would insist on envying his brilliant misery. For all his early dreams of happiness had been dispelled by the stern virtue of a woman.

It seems, however, that although unwilling to grant him any favour, the fair Azalais was extremely jealous of the poet's praise. This, at least, would appear from an anecdote in the manuscript. Count Barral had two sisters residing at his court, with whom Folquet lived on terms of intimate friendship. But his mistress did not believe in Platonic relations between troubadours and young ladies at court. Her jealousy fixed on one of her sisters-in-law, the lady Laura, of whom she declared Folquet to be enamoured. She refused to see her lover again, 'and would have no more of his prayers and fine words,' as the biographer naïvely adds. Folquet was in despair; 'he left off singing and laughing,

for he had lost the lady whom he loved more than the whole world for one with whom he had no connection beyond courtesy.' This assertion of the manuscript deserves our belief. It is quite possible, and indeed seems indicated by a passage in one of his songs, that Folquet affected a tender feeling for Laura in order to divert the attention of spies, but his real passion was all for Azalais. His songs and his conduct leave no doubt on the subject. It is an open question whether the intercession of a noble lady sought by Folquet obtained him the full pardon of his mistress. But certain it is that he remained invariably attached to her through good and evil report. For misfortune was in store for the countess. Barral, for some reason or other, got tired of his wife, obtained an invalidation of his marriage, and wedded another lady. Folquet's position was difficult. The count was his oldest friend and protector, whom he loved sincerely, as is proved by the beautiful elegy on his death, which ensued soon afterwards. But no considerations of worldly prospects or friendship could shake his allegiance to the lady of his love. We possess songs dedicated to her subsequent to the separation, in one of which, written the year after Barral's decease, the praise of the count is, curiously enough, addressed to his divorced widow. Perhaps the great peacemaker Death had taken the sting from her resentment, and the pair loved to linger over the memory of the departed.

From one of Folquet's songs it has been con-

cluded that, tired of his purposeless endeavours, he at last broke off his relation with Azalais. The poem is one of Folquet's finest and most characteristic efforts, containing a violent impeachment of Love himself. 'Too late,' the poet says, 'I have discovered Love's falsehood. I am like one who swears never to gamble again after he has lost his whole fortune.' He further complains that for more than ten years Love has been his bad debtor, promising payment and never keeping the promise, and at last he solemnly renounces his allegiance to the faithless god. The protest is forcible and well expressed; but it is by no means proved that the poet acted upon his wise resolution. On several previous occasions he had expressed similar resolutions, but always with little or no effect either on himself or on his cruel lady; and we find, indeed, not without a smile at the incongruity of the poetic mind, that the identical song in question is dedicated to Azalais.

At last the lady's death relieved him from his thraldom, but only to deliver him over to another still more fateful passion. The manuscript relates how this event, together with the loss of some of his dearest friends, preyed on the poet's mind, and how in a fit of melancholy he renounced the world, together with his wife and two sons, who are mentioned for the first time on this occasion. Folquet joined the order of Citeaux, and soon became abbot of a rich monastery, from which position he not long afterwards was raised to the still more important one of Bishop of Toulouse. To his new vocation he

brought the same zeal, the same perseverance, which marked his wooing of Azalais. It was the same flood of passion turned into a different channel. So far there is nothing to reproach in Folquet's conduct, and we even can sympathise with a man in whom all worldly desire dies with the one object of his passion. But his zeal against the heretics, carried to the pitch of cruel persecution, forms an unjustifiable complement to his asceticism. Neither can we excuse Folquet's violent hatred against Raimon VI. of Toulouse, at whose father's hands the troubadour had received much kindness. Considered in this light, the scene at the Council of the Lateran, where the glib-tongued poet is employed to compass the Count's ruin, gains a new and sinister meaning. Poetry itself Folquet seems to have abandoned on his entering the monastery. We possess of him only one religious song, a passionate expression of remorse and of terror at an impending eternal punishment, which most likely belongs to the time of his conversion. It is pleasant to think that his art at least remained undefiled by fanaticism.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### GUILLEM FIGUEIRA AND PEIRE CARDINAL.

AGAINST Folquet of Marseilles scores of troubadours might be named, who boldly espoused the cause of their country and of liberty against Frenchmen and priests. The opposition to the encroachments of the latter was of course not confined to Provence. The weaknesses of the clergy were known equally well to trouvères and troubadours, to Walther von der Vogelweide and the German minnesingers, and to Chaucer, and the author of 'Piers the Ploughman.' But nowhere was the conflict between clerical and temporal powers more bitter, nowhere were the questions at stake more important and more universally felt to be such, than in the South of France. Moreover, the satire of many of the troubadours received additional sting from personal injury. The prolonged siege which Guy of Cavaillon had to sustain in his castle was not likely to incline him favourably towards his oppressors, and the furious onslaught on the avarice of the French conquerors from the pen of Boniface de Castellane is evidently founded on bitterest and most immediate experience. Neither is there cause for wonder that the gentry in black

gowns and white hoods, mentioned by Guillem de Montanhagol in his powerful *sirventes* against the cruelties and folly of the Inquisition, were not an altogether lovely sight in the eyes of that poet.

Amongst the troubadours prominently engaged in the great struggle of their time, two distinct types may be recognised. One is the poetic freelance impatient of all restraint, and therefore doubly incensed at the oppression of both moral and religious liberties, the word 'liberty,' in his parlance, being not unfrequently a synonym of 'licence.' A man of this stamp was Guillem Figueira, the hater of priests. 'He was,' the manuscript says, 'of Toulouse, the son of a tailor, and a tailor himself. When the French took Toulouse, he went to live in Lombardy, and he knew well how to make songs and how to sing them; and he became a joglar among the citizens. He was not a man to get on with barons or gentlefolks, but he made himself most agreeable to loose women and landlords and pothouse-keepers; and whenever he saw a good courtier come near him he grew wroth and melancholy, and at once he set about humiliating him.'

This by no means flattering portrait ought to be received with caution; maybe it was drawn by one of the 'good courtiers' who had experienced the poet's cynical humour. A cynic Guillem no doubt was, a lover of low-life realism, defying polite society among his boon companions of the tavern, a genius akin to Rutebœuf, and Villon, and Rabelais. But there is nothing debased or debauched in his poetry,

as far as we can judge by the specimens remaining to us, although the unreserved violence of his invective is remarkable even amongst the works of those keenest of satirists, the troubadours. One of his *sirventeses* is noticeable by the word 'Rome,' uttered with the emphasis of hatred at the beginning of every stanza. In it the Church is held responsible for an infinitude of political and moral crimes, and the climax of invective is reached in the final outburst of angry passion.

'Rome, with wily prudence thou layest thy snares, and many a vile morsel thou devourest in spite of the hungry. Thou hast the semblance of the lamb, thy countenance is so innocent, but in thy heart thou art a rabid wolf, a crowned snake engendered by a viper, wherefore the devil greets thee as the friend of his heart.'

It is a curious fact that the Church on this occasion was valiantly defended by a lady, Gomonde of Montpelier, who pays the furious poet in his own coin, and threatens him with the death of the heretic.

Another *sirventes* by Guillem directed against the vices of the clergy is marked by the same immoderate language, but a foundation of truth is unmistakably at the bottom of his extravagant structure of abuse. The following stanza, for instance, is eminently characteristic of orthodox tactics :—

'If you say a word against them (the priests), they accuse you, and you find yourself excommunicated. If you refuse to pay, there is no peace or

friendship to be hoped from them. Holy Virgin, Lady Mary, let me see the day when I need no longer go in fear of them.'

A man of a very different stamp from the well-meaning but somewhat inconsiderate and irresponsible Guillem Figueira, was the great Peire Cardinal, who may represent the second and much higher type of the anti-clerical troubadour. A biographical notice of about twenty lines, signed by one Michael de la Tor, is all the information we possess of the poet's life. According to this sketch, Peire Cardinal was born at Puy Notre Dame, in the province of Velay, or Veillac, as the old manuscript calls it. He was of good parentage, 'the son of a knight and a lady,' and was in his childhood destined for the Church. 'And when he came to man's estate he was attracted by the vanity of the world, for he found himself gay and handsome and young. And he made many beautiful poems and songs; few *canzos*, but many *sirventeses* fine and excellent. And in these *sirventeses* he gave many good reasons and examples for those who rightly understand them; and he greatly reproached the false clergy, as is shown by his *sirventeses*. And he went to the courts of kings and gentle barons with his joglar, who sang his *sirventeses*.' According to the same account, Peire Cardinal lived up to nearly a hundred years. Another remarkable circumstance told of him is his knowledge of reading and writing—an accomplishment by no means common amongst troubadours—which he owed to his early training for the Church.

Peire Cardinal is the unrivalled master of the *sirventes*, in its most important forms—the personal, the political, the moral, and the religious. The last two only concern us here more immediately. But a few remarks are necessary to indicate the poet's manner and his general conception of the world. This conception is melancholy to a degree. Like most great masters of satire and humour, Peire Cardinal is a confirmed pessimist. The world appears to him as one vast conglomeration of selfishness and vice—a madhouse, inhabited by fools, whose remaining sense is just sufficient for them to recognise and hate a man of genius. This moody philosophy he has embodied in the original and striking treatment of a well-known story, which deserves our particular attention as one of the very few instances of narrative illustration in the poems of the troubadours.

'There was a city,' Peire Cardinal says, 'I don't know where, in which rain fell one day of such a kind, that all the inhabitants who were touched by it lost their reason. All went mad but one, who happened to be asleep in his house at the time. This one, when he woke, rose, and, as the rain had ceased, went out amongst the people, who were all raving mad. One had his clothes on, the other was naked; one was spitting up to the sky, another threw stones, another logs of wood, another tore his gown. . . . One thought he was a king, and put on noble airs; another jumped over benches. Some threatened, others cursed; some were crying, some

laughing, others talking they knew not what about, others making grimaces. He who had kept his sense was much astonished, for he saw they were mad; and he looked up and down to see if he could discover any one reasonable, but in vain: there was none. And he was greatly surprised at them, but much more were they at him when they saw he remained reasonable. They were sure he must be mad, as he failed to do as they did.'

The surprise of the fools soon is converted into rage. They knock him down, and trample on him; they push him, and pull him, and beat him; at last, he is glad to escape into his house, thrashed, covered with mud, and more dead than alive.

'This fable,' the poet exclaims, 'depicts the world and all who inhabit it; and our age is the city chokeful of madmen. The highest wisdom is to love and fear God, and to obey his commandments. But now that wisdom is lost, the rain has fallen: covetousness has come, and pride and viciousness, which have attacked all the people. And if God honours one amongst them, the others think him mad, and revile him, for God's wisdom appears to them folly. But the friend of God, wherever he be, knows them to be the fools, for they have lost the wisdom of God; and they think him mad, because he has abandoned the wisdom of the world.'

These are words of a man of genius, who has experienced the buffetings of adverse fortune, and the scorn of a world incapable or unwilling to fathom

his depth. Morbid words, if the reader likes, but forcibly uttered, and instinct with a noble disdain of the fashions and follies of the day. But Peire Cardinal's grievances were not of a narrow, egotistic kind. His poems reflect the sad time in which he lived, and the national disaster which he witnessed with deepest indignation. The avarice and selfishness of clergy and laity, the want of patriotic feeling, the barbarism prevailing amongst the nobles, and other evils fostered by those troublous times of internal and external warfare, are the favourite subjects of the poet's satire. It need hardly be added that his sympathies were all with the South against the North. Raimon VI. is his chosen hero, whom he encourages with his songs, and in whose temporary success he rejoices. 'At Toulouse,' he sings, 'there is Raimon the Count; may God protect him! As water flows from the fountain, so chivalry comes from him. Against the worst of men—nay, against the whole world—he defends himself. Frenchmen and priests cannot resist him. To the good he is humble and condescending; the wicked he destroys.'

In his accusations of the clergy, Peire is violent and sweeping; almost as violent as Guillem Figueira himself. But his censure almost always proceeds from a general motive; the difference between the two is that between a scholar and politician and a pamphleteer. Peire's language, when he speaks of the domineering propensities of the priests, is as bitter as can be imagined, but his anger is founded on

historic considerations of deepest import. It is the decay of the temporal power he deplores. 'Formerly, kings and emperors, dukes, counts and comtors[1] and knights used to govern the world; but now priests have usurped its dominion with rapine and treachery and hypocrisy, with force and persuasion. They are incensed if everything is not conceded to them, and it must be done sooner or later.' In another *sirventes*, Peire Cardinal alludes to the amiable habit of the priests—also mentioned by Guillem Figueira—of calling every one a Vaudois or heretic who dares to resist their encroachments.

One of the most forcible of Peire's songs is directed against the avarice and covetousness of the priests, whom he compares to vultures scenting a dead body. In the same *sirventes* we meet with one of those grand reflections which raise Peire Cardinal from the level of the mere satirist to that of the great moral poet. 'Do you know,' he says, 'what becomes of the riches of those who have unjustly acquired them? A mighty robber will come, who will leave them nothing. His name is Death; he will prostrate them, and entangle them in a net four yards in length, and they will be sent to a house of misery.'

It remains to point out one more feature of Peire's works, which distinguishes them from those of all his brother poets. The troubadours, it has been said, had a wise and beneficial horror of theology. There is, as far as the present writer is

[1] The degree of nobility between the Viscount and the simple Baron.

aware, not a trace in their works of the slightest interest taken by any of them in the scholastic controversies of Catholics and heretics. The only exception to this rule is a *sirventes* by Peire Cardinal, to which short reference has previously been made. Peire, as has been mentioned before, had received a learned education; he could read and write, and was evidently not without considerable claims to scholarship, according to the standard of his age. He was no doubt well versed in the absurd and hideously realistic conceptions of hell and purgatory with which mediæval theologians and preachers loved to fill the imagination of their audiences. His poem reads like a gentle satire, from the poet's point of view, on their barren discussions. The boldness of his conception and language is at the same time astonishing in a writer of the thirteenth century,

'I will begin a new *sirventes*,' he says, 'which I shall repeat on the day of judgment to Him who made and fashioned me out of nothing. If He reproaches me of anything, and wishes to give me over to damnation, I shall say: 'Lord, have mercy on me, for I have struggled with the wicked world all my life; now save me by your grace from torment.'

'And His whole court shall wonder when they hear my plea. For I say that He is unjust towards His own if He delivers them to eternal punishment. For he who loses what he might gain cannot complain of his loss. Therefore He ought to be gentle and indulgent so as to retain the souls of sinners.

'His gate ought not to be guarded, and St. Peter has little honour through being the porter. Every soul that wishes ought to be allowed to enter smiling. For that court is little to my liking where one laughs while others cry; and however great the king may be we shall find fault with him if he refuses us entrance.

'I will not despair, and on you, O Lord, my good hope is founded. Therefore you must save my soul and body, and comfort me in the hour of death. And I will propose to you a good alternative. Either send me back to where I came from on the day of my birth, or forgive me my faults. For I should not have committed them if I had not been born.'

And with this poem, which teaches a deep truth in a half-playful manner, we must take leave of Peire Cardinal. His character is of an elevated type, and his gifts would do honour to any literature. He is undoubtedly the foremost representative of moral poetry amongst the troubadours.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### LADIES AND LADY TROUBADOURS.

In a poetry so thoroughly imbued with one prevailing passion as is that of the troubadours, and in the civilisation of which this poetry is the utterance, woman naturally occupied a most important place. But to define this place is a matter of some difficulty. The poems of the troubadours themselves give us but scanty information in this respect. We there hear a great deal of the incomparable charms of Provençal ladies; their loving-kindness is extolled, or their cruelty complained of. But in few cases only are we enabled to realise from generalities of this kind an individual human being with individual passions or caprices. It would, indeed, be impossible even to decipher the numerous *senhals* or nicknames under which the poets were obliged to hide the real names of their lady-loves from the watchfulness of evil tongues and cruel husbands, but for the aid of the Provençal biographies of the old troubadours, which in most cases offer a welcome clue to the identity of these pseudonymous flames.

It is by this means that we gain cognisance of the beautiful ladies of Provence—such as the three sisters,

Maenz of Montignac, Elise of Montfort, and Maria of Ventadour—praised in impassioned song by Bertran de Born, Gaucelm Faidit, and other troubadours; and of that lovely lady with an unlovely name, Loba (she-wolf) of Penautier, who turned the fantastic brain of Peire Vidal, and sent him into the wilderness clad in a wolf's skin—a practical pun on the name of his mistress. From such hints as are found in these biographies and other contemporary sources, one may form a tangible idea of a Provençal lady of the twelfth or thirteenth century; of her position in society; and, most of all, of her decisive influence on the poetry of the troubadours.

What was the type of the lady of Provence of whom so much has been said in verse and prose? Was she a demure, well-conducted person clad in sober colours, mending stockings and cutting bread and butter for the children; a model housewife, in fact, such as might be found in a best-possible world of Mrs. Lynn Linton's devising? Or was she, on the other hand, a progressively minded female, despising the frivolities of society, and thirsting for medical degrees and the franchise, or whatever may have been the mediæval equivalents of these much-desired prerogatives? I fear that even Margarida de Rossilho, 'the lady most praised of her time for all that is praiseworthy, and noble, and courteous,' would have fallen far short of these divergent ideals of our latter days. Her main purpose of existence was—shocking though it may sound—altogether not practical, but ornamental. It was her choice and her

duty to wield in a society, only just emerging from barbarism, the softening influence to which we owe the phenomenon of a highly finished literature and of an astonishing degree of social refinement at the very outset of the mediæval epoch. Whether this result was altogether unworthy of woman's mission in the history of civilisation graver judges must decide.

There is extant, dating from about the middle of the thirteenth century, a curious poem in rhymed couplets entitled 'L'essenhamen de la donzela que fe Amanieus des Escas com apela dieu d'amors;' *Anglice*: 'Instruction to a young lady, composed by Sir Amanieu des Escas, called God of Love.' In this treatise we are supplied with a minute account of the accomplishments expected from a well-educated young lady, and of the bad habits most prejudicial to her character. The poet is supposed to be addressing a noble damsel living at the court of some great baron, as a sort of 'lady-help' to his wife; this being a not unusual, and undoubtedly a most efficient, method of polite education in Provence. The young lady has accosted Amanieu on a lonely walk, asking for his advice in matters fashionable. This the poet at first refuses to tender, alleging that 'you (the damsel) have ten times as much sense as I, and that is the truth.' But, after his modest scruples are once overcome, he launches forth into a flood of good counsel. He systematically begins with enforcing the good old doctrine of 'early to rise;' touches delicately on the mysteries of the early toilet, such as lacing, washing of arms, hands, and head, which,

he sententiously adds, ought to go before the first-mentioned process; and, after briefly referring to the especial care required by teeth and nails, he leaves the dressing-room for the church, where a quiet, undemonstrative attitude is recommended; the illicit use of eyes and tongue being mentioned amongst the temptations peculiarly to be avoided. Directions of similar minuteness assist the young lady at the dinner table; the cases in which it would be good taste, and those in which it would be the reverse, to invite persons to a share of the dishes within her reach are specified; and the rules as to carving, washing one's hands before and after dinner, and similar matters, leave nothing to be desired. 'Always temper your wine with water, so that it cannot do you harm,' is another maxim of undeniable wisdom.

After dinner follows the time of polite conversation in the *sala* (drawing-room), the arbour, or on the battlements of the castle; and now the teachings of Amanieu become more and more animated, and are enlivened occasionally by practical illustrations of great interest. 'And if at this season,' he says, 'a gentleman takes you aside, and wishes to talk of courtship to you, do not show a strange or sullen behaviour, but defend yourself with pleasant and pretty repartees. And if his talk annoys you, and makes you uneasy, I advise you to ask him questions, for instance: "Which ladies do you think are more handsome, those of Gascony or England; and which are more courteous, and faithful, and

good?" And if he says those of Gascony, answer without hesitation: "Sir, by your leave, English ladies are more courteous than those of any other country." But if he prefers those of England, tell him Gascon ladies are much better behaved; and thus carry on the discussion, and call your companions to you to decide the questions.' I defy any modern professor of deportment to indicate a more graceful and appropriate way of giving a harmless turn to a conversation, or cutting short an awkward *tête-à-tête*.

And the same sense of tact and social ease pervades the remainder of the poem, which consists chiefly of valuable hints how to accept and how to refuse an offer of marriage without giving more encouragement or more offence than necessary. Upon the whole, it must be admitted that 'Amanieu des Escas, called God of Love,' although undoubtedly a pedant, is the least objectionable and tedious pedant that ever preached 'the graces' from the days of Thomasin of Zerclaere to those of Lord Chesterfield. But the important point for us is the enormous weight attached to these rules of etiquette in the education of the Provençal lady. Again and again the advantages of *cortesia*, *avinensa*, and whatever the numerous other terms for a graceful, courteous behaviour may be, are emphasised: 'even the enemy of all your friends ought to find you civil-spoken,' the poet exclaims in a fit of polite enthusiasm. However exaggerated and one-sided this point of view may appear to the reader, he ought to re-

member that in primitive societies the code of ethics can be enforced alone by the power of custom; the derivation, indeed, of our word morality from the Latin *mores* is by no means a mere etymological coincidence.

Prepared by an education such as I have tried to sketch, the lady generally contracted a marriage at an early age, the choice of a husband being in most cases determined by her parents or her feudal overlord. In the higher classes of society —and these alone concern us here—her own inclination was taken into little account. Her position at the head of a great baron's family was by no means an easy one. She had to soften the coarse habits and words of the warlike nobles; and, on the other hand, to curb the amorous boldness of the gay troubadours who thronged the courts of the great barons. The difficulties and temptations of such a situation were great, and further increased by the perfect liberty which, in ancient as in modern France, married ladies seem to have enjoyed. Indirect, but none the less conclusive, evidence establishes this point beyond doubt. We hear, for instance, of ladies travelling about the country without attendance; like the pretty wives of Sir Guari and Sir Bernart, whom Count William of Poitiers deceived by acting a deaf-and-dumb pilgrim. Even the dueña, as a regular institution at least, seems to have been unknown in Provence. There certainly were jealous husbands who tried to protect their wives from gallant intrusion by watchfulness and strict confinement.

The husband of the lovely Flamenca is an example of such fruitless care. But his fate could not invite imitation; and the universal horror expressed by all gallant knights and ladies at this fictitious and at some real instances of similar cruelty, sufficiently proves the high degree of personal freedom enjoyed by the ladies of Southern France.

That this freedom was frequently abused is, unfortunately, no matter of doubt. France is not, and never has been, a prosperous climate for the growth of wedded happiness. The heroines of all the love-stories connected with the history of the troubadours are, indeed, with not a single exception that I am aware of, married ladies. This fact is certainly of deep significance, but its importance ought not to be overrated. We must remember that the troubadours and their biographers were by nature and profession inclined to magnify the force and extension of the great passion. Frequently they may, and in some cases we positively know that they did, mistake gracious condescension for responsive love; and to accept all their statements *au pied de la lettre* would be about as advisable as to judge the institution of marriage in modern France solely by the works of Flaubert and Ernest Feydeau. In many cases, however, the perfect innocence of the relations between the troubadour and the lady he celebrates is fully acknowledged by all parties. It was the privilege of high-born and high-minded women to protect and favour poetry, and to receive in return the troubadours' homage. It is in this beautiful character

as admirer and patroness of the literature of her country, that I wish first to consider the lady of Provence. In the choice of an individual instance of the relation alluded to, I have been guided by a feeling of historic, not to say poetic, justice.

History and fiction have vied with each other in painting the picture of Eleanor, wife of Henry II. of England, in the darkest colours. The former convicts her of faithlessness to two husbands, and of conspiracy with her own sons against their father; the latter charges her with the murder of Rosamond Clifford. Any redeeming feature in such a character ought to be welcome to the believer in human nature. Her connection with Bernart de Ventadour, one of the sweetest and purest of troubadours, is such a feature. The poet came to her court in sorrow. The lady he loved had been torn from him, and it was by her own desire that he left her and the country where she dwelt. He now turned to Eleanor for comfort and sympathy, and his hope was not disappointed. The old Provençal biography of Bernart is provokingly laconic with regard to the subject. 'He went to the Duchess of Normandy,' it says, 'who was young and of great worth, and knew how to appreciate worth and honour, and he said much in her praise. And she admired the *canzos* and verses of Bernart. And she received him very well, and bade him welcome. And he stayed at her court a long time, and became enamoured of her, and she of him, and he composed many beautiful songs of her. And while he was

with her King Henry of England made her his wife, and took her away from Normandy with him. And from that time Bernart remained sad and woful.'

This statement is incorrect in more than one respect, and may be cited as another instance of the desire on the part of the ancient biographers to give a dramatic, and at the same time an erotic, turn to the stories of their heroes. The allegation of the poet's prolonged courtship of the Duchess of Normandy having been interrupted by the lady's marriage with Henry is self-contradictory, for the simple reason that she became Duchess of Normandy and took up her residence in that country in consequence of this identical marriage, which took place in the same year with her separation from Louis VII. of France. Moreover, all the songs known to us as having been addressed by the poet to Eleanor are written after Henry's accession to the English throne. One of these songs, in which Bernart calls himself 'a Norman or Englishman for the king's sake,' was most likely composed in England, whither Bernart had followed the court of his supposed rival.

The same songs tend also to throw grave doubts on another statement of the old manuscript—that with regard to the mutual passion between lady and troubadour. It is true that his devotion frequently adopts the language of love; but there is no evidence to show that this love was returned by anything but friendship and kindness. He never boasts of favours granted, as troubadours were but too prone to do, and the joyful expectation expressed in one

of his poems is evidently and confessedly a hope against hope. One somewhat obscure remark of the poet seems to indicate that King Henry did not regard the matter in an altogether innocent light. The line reads thus in the original Provençal: 'Per vos me sui del rei partiz;' which means, 'For your sake I have parted from the king,' and seems to indicate some sort of disagreement between the poet and the lady's husband. But, supposing even that Henry's jealousy were proved by this vague hint, we are not for that reason obliged to adopt his suspicions. Internal evidence points strongly towards a different relation—a relation much more common between the ladies and poets of Provence than is generally believed, and which is marked by fervent admiration on the one side, and by helpful and gentle, but irreproachable, kindness on the other.

Frequently, however, the case was different. Not all ladies were inexorable: not all troubadours contented with a purely ideal worship. Ardent wooings led to passionate attachments, and lovers' bliss was frequently followed by lovers' quarrels. Such quarrels—or, it might be, differences of opinion on abstract points of love and gallantry—were, as we know, discussed in a poetic form: the '*tenso*,' or 'song of contention,' being especially reserved for that purpose. It was mostly on occasions of this kind that ladies took up the lute and mingled their voices with the chorus of Provençal singers. The names of fourteen gifted women have in this manner

been transmitted to us—a very modest figure, seeing that the entire number of the troubadours is close upon four hundred. But even of these fourteen lady-troubadours few, if any, seem to have been professional or even amateur poets. The works of most of them are exceedingly few in number, consisting, in several cases, of a single song or part of a *tenso*. This reticence on the part of the ladies cannot be praised too highly; it explains to us at the same time their position in the literary movement of their time. Literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a lucrative and honourable calling, followed by many members of the poorer nobility and of the lower classes. Professional singers of this kind naturally depended on their productions for a livelihood. Hence the number, and hence also the occasional coldness and formality, of their songs.

But this was different with women. With them poetry was not an employment, but an inward necessity. They poured forth their mirth or their grief, and after that relapsed into silence. Even Clara of Anduse, the brilliant and beautiful lady who conquered the obstinate indifference of Uc de St. Cyr, the celebrated troubadour, and who is described as ambitious of literary fame, does not seem to have sinned by over-production. Only one of her songs remains to us, and there is no reason to believe that time has been more than usually destructive to her works.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### BEATRICE DE DIE.

THE only lady-troubadour of whose poems we possess a sufficient number to allow of a fair judgment of her capability is the Countess Beatrice de Die. She may also serve to illustrate the essentially subjective conception of the art of poetry which marks the phase in literature alluded to. The unvarying subject of her songs is the story of her love; without this passion she would have remained mute. Her first song is the embodiment of new-awakened happiness; her last a dirge over hopes dead and lost.

'The Countess de Die,' says the old manuscript, 'was the wife of Guillem de Poitou and a good and beautiful lady; she became enamoured of Rambaut of Orange, and wrote many fine poems of him.' This Rambaut was the third ruler of that name of the country of Aurenga or Orange, in the south of France, from which the Dutch line of the house of Nassau derived its name. The English cavaliers, by the way, were considerably out in their etymological reckoning when they derisively squeezed the orange.

Rambaut is well known as the author of numerous poems, some of them rather coarse in character. One of his songs is metrically curious by the poet relapsing at the end of every stanza into a few lines of prose, in which admirers of Walt Whitman will perhaps discover rhythm. In another poem he gives an elaborate prescription for gaining the hearts and bending the minds of women, quite in the spirit of the coarsest scenes of the *Taming of the Shrew*. The apparent disagreement of the poet with his own rules expressed in one stanza does not much alter the case in his favour, neither can we consider his calling one of his lady-loves by the nickname 'my Devil' a sign of refinement on his part. The exaggerated and boldly uttered opinion of his own poetic power is an additional unpleasant feature of Rambaut's character. His songs to Beatrice de Die, of which several remain, are marked by extravagant gallantry rather than by true feeling. It may, for instance, be doubted whether the lady had much reason to be pleased with compliments of this kind: 'The joy you give me is such that a thousand doleful people would be made merry by my joy. And on my joy my whole family could live with joy without eating.'

The reader will notice the frequent repetition of the word 'joy,' which occurs once in every line of the stanza. This is an instance of the artificialities in which many troubadours, Rambaut of Orange foremost amongst the number, took pride. A similar metrical contrivance is found in another

song by the same poet, most likely also addressed to the Countess de Die. It is called the '*rim dictional*,' and consists of the combination, in the rhyming syllables, of two words which can be derived from each other by either adding or deducting one or more syllables. Thus, for instance, the feminine and masculine forms of the adjective and participle; *at-ada*, *ut-uda* stand in the relation of 'dictional rhymes.' It is sadly significant to see that this silly contrivance has been adopted by Beatrice de Die in the song which expresses the fulness of her loving bliss. Perhaps it would be too bold to conjecture without additional evidence that, in this as in so many cases, the teacher had developed into the lover; but this sign of intellectual dependence is at any rate highly characteristic. To give the reader an idea of the sweetness of Beatrice's metre and diction, I will quote one stanza of the poem alluded to in the original.

Ab joi et ab joven m'apais
  E jois e jovens m'apaia;
Qar mos amics es lo plus gais
  Per q'ieu sui coindet' e gaia.
E pois ieu li sui veraia
  Bes tanh q'el me sia verais.
Qanc de lui amar nom estrais
  Ni ai en cor quem n'estraia.

'With joy and youth I am content; may joy and youth give me contentment! For my friend is most joyous, therefore I am amiable and gay. And as I am true to him, true he must be to me. For I do

not withhold my love from him, so neither can I think that he should withhold his from me.'

Unfortunately the serene sky of this happiness was soon to be overclouded. We can distinctly recognise the mutual position of the lovers. Count Rambaut, if he had at any time felt a serious passion for Beatrice, soon got over that weakness. In vain he tries to hide his apathy from the keen glance of the loving woman. She is appeased for the moment by his grandiloquent vows of eternal devotion; but soon her suspicion awakes again with renewed strength. Such are the feelings which have inspired the admirable *tenso* respectively ascribed to Rambaut and Beatrice, but most likely composed by both of them in alternate stanzas of reproach and excuse. The poet, taxed with indifference and fickleness, explains that the rareness of his visits is caused by his fear of the evil tongues and spies 'who have taken my sense and breath away.' But the lady is little impressed with this tender care for her reputation. 'No thanks do I owe you,' she says, 'for refusing to see me when I send for you, because of the harm I might suffer through it. And if you take greater care of my welfare than I do myself, you must forsooth be over-loyal; more so than the Knights of the Hospital.' Only by the most extravagant promises of amendment is the poet able to gain from the lady the qualified concession: 'Friend, I will trust you so far, so that I find you true and loyal to me at all times.'

A second song of the countess marks a further

stage of this unfortunate amour. The poet now has dropped the mask; the lady is deserted—deserted for another love. The sight of her misery is pathetic, although, perhaps, less dignified than would be the silent pride of a noble-hearted woman. But pride is strange to the heart of poor Beatrice. Her desire is not to upbraid, but, if possible, to regain, her truant lover; and nothing she considers beneath her dignity that may accomplish this sole desire of her heart. Abject flattery of her lover and even the praise of her own beauty are resorted to by her with a naïve openness which, somehow, makes us forget her utter want of dignity. There is about her poem the true ring of simple pathos, which I have tried to retain as far as possible in the subjoined rendering of three of the stanzas:

CANZO.

A chantar m'er de so qu'eu no volria
Tant me rancur de lui cui sui amia;
Car eu l'am mais que nuilla ren que sia:
Vas lui nom val merces ni cortezia,
Ni ma beltatz ni mos pretz ni mos sens;
C'atressim sui enganad' e trahia
Com degr'esser, s'eu fos dezavinens.

Meraveill me cum vostre cors s'argoilla
Amics vas me per qu'ai razon quem doilla.
Non es ges dreitz c'autr'amors vos mi toilla,
Per nuilla ren queus diga nius acoilla.
E membre vos cals fol comensamens
De nostr'amor; ja dompnedeus non voilla
Qu'en ma colpa sial departimens.

Proeza grans, qu'el vostre cors s'aizina,
E lo rics pretz qu'avetz m'en ataina.
C'una non sai, loindana ni vezina,

Si vol amar vas vos no si' aclina:
Mas vos, amics es ben tant conoissens,
Que ben devetz conoisser la plus fina;
E membre vos de nostres partimens.

*Translation.*

It is in vain, this silence I must break;
The fault of him I love moves me to speak.
Dearer than all the world he is to me;
But he regards not love nor courtesy,
Nor wisdom, nor my worth, nor all my beauty—
He has deceived me. Such my fate should be,
If I had failed to him in loving duty.

Oh, strange and past belief that in disdain
Your heart, oh friend, should look upon my pain;
That now another love should conquer you,
For all that I may say, that I may do!
Have you forgotten the sweet first communion
Of our two hearts? Now sorely would I rue
If by my guilt were caused this last disunion.

The noble worth, the valour you possess,
Your fame and beauty add to my distress.
For far and near the noble ladies all,
If love can move them, listen to your call.
But you, my friend, whose soul is keenest-sighted,
Must know who loves you, and is true withal.
And ah! remember now the troth we plighted.

The reader need hardly be told that this touching appeal proved in vain. We have another song of Beatrice, in which she deplores the final loss of her friend. It is remarkable that even now no word of anger escapes her lips. She blames herself for a reticence of feeling which, if she had possessed it, might have averted her fate. This is the first stanza of the plaintive ditty:

Ah, sadly, sadly do I miss
A knight of valour once mine own!
To all at all times be it known,
My heart was his—was only his.
Foolishly my secret keeping,
I hid my love when he was near;
But in my heart I held him dear,
Day and night, awake and sleeping.

And here we must take leave of the beautiful Beatrice de Die. She is not without interest from a psychological point of view, and represents the literary capabilities of her class by the intensely subjective character of her work, which is the immediate outgrowth of her feeling.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE COURTS OF LOVE.

THERE is yet one other important character in which I should wish to introduce the lady of Provence to the gentle reader. It has already been pointed out that to her influence the refinement of manners and the high conception of the duties of gallantry in the early middle ages are mainly due. But nowhere did her gentle sway exercise a more irresistible power than in that truest domain of womanhood—love. This love was little restrained in Provence by the legitimate bounds of marriage, but it was not altogether lawless for that reason. There were certain rules of conduct instinctively felt rather than definitely formulated, but which, nevertheless, no lady or gallant cavalier could transgress with impunity. Discretion, for instance, was a demand most strictly enforced by these self-imposed laws of the loving community. No lady of good feeling would have accepted the services of a knight who had failed in this respect to a former mistress. Neither was it thought compatible with correct principles for a lady to deprive another lady of her lover. Inquiries into the antecedents of intended *cicisbeos* were of frequent occurrence,

and only when a troubadour could prove his 'being off with the old love' could he hope for a favourable reception of his vows. We indeed know of one case at least where a lady, although herself desirous of the services of a poet, effected his reconciliation with a rival beauty. But this loyal feeling did not extend to that bugbear and scapegoat of gallant society in Provence—the husband. No amount of verbal falsehood or hypocrisy was thought unjustifiable in the endeavour to dupe his well-founded suspicion. His resentment of injuries received was, on the other hand, punished by the general interdict of polite society. Such, at least, is the no doubt somewhat high-coloured picture drawn by Provençal poets and romancers.

To the great influence of noble ladies on public opinion, and to the *esprit de corps* evinced by their recorded words and doings, we have to trace back the general and time-honoured idea of the ladies' tribunal, or 'court of love.' To us in England Chaucer's poem of that title has sanctioned the name.[1]

[1] Grave doubts have recently been thrown on the authenticity of this poem. Into these I cannot enter here. But it seems strange that the bearing of the reality or fictitiousness of the 'courts of love' on the mooted point should have been entirely overlooked. Chaucer's visit to France (1359) coincides with the time when amateur judges and juries deciding questions of gallantry were all the rage, and these might very well have suggested to him the symbolical machinery of the poem. But of course the intrinsic probability of Chaucer having written *a* poem on the 'Court of Love' does not amount to much compared with the philological arguments of Mr. Skeat (see 'Athenæum,' November 4, 1876). At the same time it seems surprising that neither he nor Mr. Furnivall is apparently acquainted with the historical controversy on the point, in

A prettier picture moreover can hardly be imagined than that drawn by many old and modern writers of an assembly of beautiful women sitting in judgment on guilty lovers, and gravely deciding knotty points of the amorous code. The slight tinge of pedantry in such a picture only adds to its mediæval quaintness. The only drawback is that, like so many other pretty and quaint pictures, it has no counterpart in the reality of things; not as far, at least, as the south of France and the times of the troubadours are concerned. Friederich Diez, the lately deceased great philologist to whom the history of Romance literature and languages owes so much, has once and for ever destroyed the fable of the 'courts of love' in connection with the troubadours. This was done in 1825; but ever since the uprooted notion has gone on producing fresh and powerful shoots in the fertile soil of periodical and generally unscientific literature. It is, indeed, one of the few dainties of genuine or pseudo-Provençal composition which have been frequently and *ad nauseam* dished up to the general reader of this country.

The state of the case is briefly this :—

In 1817 the well-known French scholar, M. Raynouard, published his large collection of Provençal poems, entitled 'Choix des Poésies originales des Troubadours.' In the second volume of this work he

spite of Diez's admirable work, and of the paper I wrote on the subject in a monthly periodical. If this is true of scholars, what can be expected of the general reader? At this rate the 'courts of love' may protract their spurious existence for another century or so—in England at least.

has inserted a long and elaborate inquiry of his own into the subject of the 'courts of love.' He determines the period of their duration as the time from the middle of the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth century or thereabouts, and gives a somewhat minute description of the legal and polite customs observed at these extraordinary tribunals. According to him the members of the court were noble ladies guided by a written code of love, their decisions again making precedent. An appeal to a different tribunal was admissible. The parties had, as a rule, to plead their cause in person; at other times, however, written documents—affidavits, as we should say—were accepted, the latter frequently taking the form of *tensos*. To these *tensos*, therefore, we ought to look for some confirmation of these statements; and, according to Raynouard, such confirmation is forthcoming in more than sufficient abundance. It is, as we know, the custom in these songs of contention for the two disputants to refer their case to the arbitration of third parties. 'This *tenso* will last for ever,' says one troubadour, after having exhausted his arguments. 'Let us take our cause to the Dauphin; he will decide and conclude it in peace.' But here is the rub. The umpires mentioned on this and many other occasions are always one or two, more rarely three, individuals, generally friends of the contending parties, or else well-meaning and courteous persons, men or women, who decide according to the rules of common sense, or quote the opinions of celebrated troubadours by way of rule and guidance. Not once

is a 'court of love' mentioned in these *tensos*, nor indeed in any other poem, by a genuine troubadour. The expression as well as the thing was unknown to them. Both belong to a much later time.

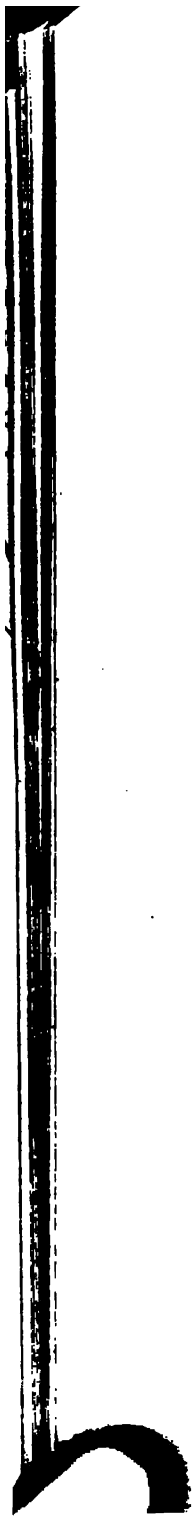
The period of spontaneous production in the literature of most nations is followed by that of classification. Byzantine scholarship and Athenian tragedy belong to different phases of intellectual life. When the poetry of the troubadours began to decay, grammarians and metrical scholars sprang up, and artificial poetry flourished at the *Jeux Floraux*. In the same sense it may be said that 'courts of love' could not exist while love itself was alive. The laws of gallantry were inscribed in the hearts of ladies and troubadours while the brilliant, buoyant life of Southern France was in its acme. When this civilisation was crushed, when these beautiful times lived but in the remembrance of a few, it might become necessary to preserve in dead formulas and codes the remnants of a better past. But even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the south of France seems not to have been a favourable soil for the 'courts of love,' as certain amateur societies of gallant and literary ladies and gentlemen then began to be called. The chief witness on the subject, Andreas Capellanus, who quotes several sentences delivered by these *curiæ dominarum*, seems to refer chiefly to the north of France.[1] Another French-

[1] The reader interested in these matters may find some account of Andreas' book in the pretty little edition of Chaucer for which Mr. Robert Bell is responsible (vol. iv. pp. 116 *et passim*).

man, Martial d'Auvergne, an advocate in Paris, has introduced the technical language of the law into these amorous discussions; much to the edification of his contemporaries (he lived in the fifteenth century), to judge from the number of editions published of his work.

The sober truth arrived at by these and many other considerations too long to mention may be summed up thus: 'Courts of love,' as established tribunals with written codes, are altogether fictitious. Amateur societies of that name occur in the late middle ages, but chiefly in the north of France. To the troubadours the name and essence of 'courts of love' were entirely unknown.

All the absurd stories of the Chaplain the ingenuous editor accepts as gospel truth. Queen Eleanor, Richard Cœur de Lion, and other worthies are named as the presidents of these amorous parliaments, of which the world knew nothing till hundreds of years after their deaths. Several of the *arrêts d'amour* are quoted, and the power of the court is said to have extended even to the assessing of pecuniary damages and the inflicting of corporal punishment. This *naïveté* is the more touching on Mr. Bell's part, as, unlike Mr. Furnivall and Mr. Skeat, he is acquainted with Diez's pamphlet. But his faith is proof against the most trenchant criticism.



*PART III.*

# TECHNICAL



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE ORIGIN OF RHYME.

THE foundation of poetry, that is of the expression of human feelings in verse, is rhythm. According to Aristoxenus, the greatest metrical scholar of Greece, rhythm is the division of time into equally recurring shorter and longer parts; but it becomes perceptible only by being applied to certain movements performed in this time (τὸ ῥυθμιζόμενον). This object of rhythm is, of course, different in the different arts. In music, it is the notes of a melody (μέλος); in dance, the movements of hands and feet (σωματικὴ κίνησις); and in poetry, the words (λέξις). In ancient, and especially in Greek, poetry, rhythm was the first and chief principle of verse; and Greek poets observed this principle with the greatest consistency, measuring their lines exclusively according to the length or shortness of the syllables, without taking any notice of the rhetorical accent of each word, which depends, of course, greatly on its meaning. This metrical system, founded entirely on the beauty of sound, agrees perfectly with what we know of the plastic art of the Greeks, where also the graceful and harmonious form predominates over the emotional expression of the features. There is some-

thing analogous to be found in the primitive poetry of the Teutonic nations. The aim of their poets was to impress the audience by the strong and heroic sound of their verses; and in consequence the principle of their metrical system was purely rhythmical. In *Beowulf*, as well as in the *Hildebrandliet*, or the *Wessobrunner Gebet*, each line contains a certain number of long and highly-accented (*hochbetont*) syllables, which are further emphasised by alliteration. The rhetorical importance of these syllables does not in the least influence their metrical value.

Latin poetry was not at first equally strict. The earlier Roman poets always tried to make the rhetorical and the metrical accent coincide. This was the more easy for them, as their rules of quantity were not yet clearly defined. Only the later Roman poets, and among them especially Horace, who were under the influence of Greek literature, introduced the accurate rules of Hellenic prosody into their own language, and at the same time made the metrical accent quite independent of the rhetorical. A remarkable sign of the difference between the Roman and Greek metrical systems is the way in which the two nations used the most important terms of rhythmical art, arsis and thesis. Aristoxenus, founding his metrical system entirely on the rhythms of dance and music, called arsis the weak part of the metre, because there the dancer raised his foot (ἄϊρω), and thesis the strong part, when the dancer trod the ground (τίθημι)—exactly contrary to the modern use of these words made familiar by Bentley. The best

Roman metrical scholars, such as Atilius Fortunatianus and Terentianus Maurus, on the other hand, led by the rhetorical accent of their language, called arsis the first, and thesis the second, part of the metre, whether weak or strong, following, however, in this the metrical ἐγχειρίδιον of an unknown late-Greek author.[1] The only exception is Martianus Capella, the author of 'De Nuptiis Philologiæ et Mercurii,' a work considered, during the middle ages, as a standard authority for all the branches of human knowledge. In his translation of Aristides Quintilianus, he adopted from him the use of arsis and thesis, although it was in direct contradiction to his own definition: 'Arsis est elevatio, thesis depositio vocis ac remissio.' The introduction of Greek prosody into the Latin language was simply a matter of art; and its reign could last only so long as the great poets of the classic period kept down the influence of popular poetry. As soon as the unlimited sway of these grand traditions ceased, the original tendencies of the Roman language began to oppose the Greek-Augustan orthodoxy; and this struggle, which lasted for many centuries, ended in the complete overthrow of the ancient prosody. It would lead too far to follow the traces of this process through its different phases; it is enough to say that, at the beginning of the middle ages, the rhetorical as against the metrical accent had more than reconquered its original rights in Latin poetry. In the grand religious songs

[1] Westphal, *Fragmente und Lehrsätze der griechischen Rhythmiker*, pp. 14, 101.

of mediæval monkish poetry, such as 'Dies iræ, dies illa' or 'Stabat mater dolorosa,' the verses are measured entirely according to the modern principle of rhetorical accent. Even where the mediæval poets tried to keep up the appearance of ancient versification they could not abstain from yielding to the powerful influence of rising mediæval art. The best example of this fact is the favourite metre of monkish scholars, the Leonine hexameter. The poems written in this metre—as may be seen by the following two lines from the poem 'De contemptu mundi,' of the eleventh century,

Cumque laborum | cumque dolorum | sit sitabundus,
Nos irritans | nos invitans | ad mala mundus—

utterly neglect the fundamental rules of ancient prosody. The same might be said, even in a higher degree, of Godfrid of Viterbo. He goes so far as to join two leonine hexameters and one pentameter in a stanza; for example:

Imperii sidus | plaudunt tibi mensis et idus,
Metra tibi fidus | regalia dat Gotefridus
Quæ tibi sæpe legas | ut bene regna regas.

The principle of dividing the stanza into three parts which is the basis of Italian and German strophes, can be easily recognised here; and the mediæval poet might have written his sham hexameters much more properly in this way:—

Pedes { Imperii sidus
Plaudunt tibi mensis et idus.
Metra tibi fidus
Regalia dat Gotefridus.

Cauda { Quæ tibi sæpe legas
Ut bene regna regas.

One of the most striking features of this rising poetry is the rhyme—an element quite independent of the metrical principle, and founded entirely on the sound and rhetorical accent of the words. This rhyme is used no longer as an occasional effect, in different places of the verse, but defined by the strictest rules of art. It has been a favourite subject of investigation with literary scholars, to determine who first used the rhyme. Monkish mediæval poets and Provençal troubadours have found enthusiastic defenders of their claims to this great invention. It appears however that the question itself was a mistake. Nobody invented the rhyme: it has existed as long as poetry itself. Horace and Homer knew it as well as Byron and Goethe; but the rhythmical principle prevailed too largely in the Latin and Greek languages to allow the rhyme, as a rhetorical element, to attain that influence which it gained by a natural process, when verses began to be measured according to the modern principle of rhetorical accent. Wilhelm Grimm, in his monograph 'Zur Geschichte des Reims,' has collected with great care the numerous instances of rhyme in the classic Roman period. The rule is, as Grimm shows, that the chief cæsura in the third foot of the hexameter rhymes with the end of the verse; but in other places also the rhyming words may be found. Grimm, however, decidedly goes too far when he sees an intentional rhyme in all these cases. The Latin language, owing to its consonant final syllables in declensions and conjugations, possessed an immense quantity of rhym-

ing material, and moreover each adjective had to agree with its noun, if it followed the same declension. It is therefore difficult to see how the poet could have avoided bringing into the same verse very often two or even more words ending in the same way. In a verse, for instance, like that quoted by Grimm from Virgil's 'Bucolics,'

Vare tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella,

no Roman poet could have intended, nor a Roman ear have noticed, a rhyme between 'tristia' and 'bella;' especially as the different metrical value of the two syllables modified the sound of the two *a*'s. Grimm seems not to have been able to free himself altogether from the propensity of biographers to overrate the importance of their heroes. However, in innumerable other cases rhyme has decidedly been used of set purpose by the Roman poets, especially where the corresponding words are found either in the chief cæsura and the end of the same verse, or at the end of two verses following each other. Of both cases an example may be cited from Horace, whose fine ear and ability to avail himself of beauties of rhythm and sound make him an important witness for the intentional use of rhyme.

Ille gravem du*ro* terram qui vertit arat*ro*,[1]

affords an excellent instance of rhyme in the chief cæsura; while the lines

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunto
Et quocumque volent animum auditoris agunto,[2]

[1] *Sat.* 1. i. 28. [2] *Ars Poet.* 99.

prove even the existence of a sort of feminine rhyme in Latin poetry. Horace also shows how the Roman poets used the rhyme for onomatopoetic purposes. In the celebrated line,

Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus,[1]

the quick jump of the little animal could not have been better illustrated than by the rhyme of the two words immediately following each other—'Schlagreim,' as the German meistersingers appropriately call it. Though there can be no doubt that the Latin poets of the classic period knew and occasionally used rhyme, it never was to them of the same vital importance that it is to modern poets; and in fact it never could be, so long as the rhythmical accent preserved its unlimited power; for this is decidedly unfavourable to rhyme. In all those cases, for instance, where the chief cæsura of the hexameter rhymed with the end of the same verse, which, as we have seen, was the usual way, the two corresponding syllables had different metrical accents. In the line already cited,

Īllĕ grăvēm dūrō tērrām quī vērtĭt ărātrŏ,

the *o* of *duro* stands in the arsis, and therefore has quite a different sound from the *o* in *aratro*, which stands in the thesis. This becomes the more evident in those very rare cases where the rhyme in this position contains two syllables, or is, as we should say, feminine. In Horace there is only one instance of this; and indeed what could be the use of

[1] *Ars Poet.* 139.

a rhyme which, if the verse were read according to rhythmical principles, would be scarcely audible ?—

Frātrēm mœ*rēntĭs'* rāptō dē frātrĕ dŏ*lēn'tĭs.*[1]

But by the same fact the destructive influence of rhyme on the rhythmical principle becomes evident. The line, for instance, already quoted from Godfrey of Viterbo, would, if properly scanned, have sounded thus :

Mētră tĭbī *fidūs'* rēgālĭă dāt Gŏtĕf*rī'dŭs.*

But this way of destroying the feminine rhyme by the rhythmical accent certainly did not tally with the feeling of the mediæval poet; and it may be assumed that he accentuated *fídus* exactly like Gotef*rídus*, as if it were a trochee. This at the same time agreed perfectly with the rhetorical accent of the word. Reading the whole verse according to the same principle, the first part of it,

Métra tíbi fídus,

became quite trochaic in character, and the idea of the hexameter is utterly destroyed. This destruction of the rhythmical principle in mediæval Latin poetry was almost contemporary with the same phenomenon in Teutonic literature. Here also the dominion of purely rhythmical measurement and alliteration was victoriously contested by rhyme and rhetorical accent. At the beginning of the middle-high-German period, alliteration as a principle of art disappeared ; and by the great minnesingers of the

[1] *Epist.* I. xiv. 7.

twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was used only occasionally, and without any strict rule, just as rhyme was by the old Roman poets. It was chiefly preserved in old alliterative formulæ, such as 'Haus und Hof,' or our 'Kith and Kin.' A beautiful example of this is found in the last stanza but one of the 'Nibelunge Nôt':

> Mit leide was verendet des künges hochgezît
> als ie diu *l*îbe *l*eide z'aller jungeste gît.

Rhythmical accent, however, existed side by side with rhetorical accent much longer in German than in any of the Romance languages; and traces of its influence may be found almost till the beginning of the modern high-German epoch.

In the Romance languages the decline of the rhythmical principle was even more complete than in the mediæval Latin or in any of the Teutonic idioms. The feeling for rhythm in those languages was so entirely lost that they were not able even to preserve the rhetorical accent in sufficient strength to make it of any avail for metrical purposes. Although in most of the poems written in the Romance languages there is a certain resemblance to the iambic or trochaic fall, yet the scanning of a whole stanza according to these metres would in most cases prove impossible. In modern French, which has gone farthest in neglecting the rhythmical difference between the syllables within the same word, there is scarcely a single line of the most finished poets which could be read metrically without altering even that remnant of rhetorical accent which has been

preserved. In the following verse, taken from Boileau's sixth Satire,

Căr à pĕi*nē* lĕs cōqs cŏm*m*ēnçănt leūr rămāgĕ,

there are two striking examples of this fact; for the accent of the (if anything) iambic metre in the word *peine* is on a syllable which in prose is scarcely pronounced at all, and in *commençant* the last syllable is at least as long as the last but one. Where modern French poets try to introduce something resembling rhythm, they generally do so less by means of the rhetorical accent in words of several syllables than by putting the more or less important parts of the sentence, such as article and noun or personal pronoun and verb, in thesis and arsis respectively. In the main it may fairly be said that in Romance poetry metre is entirely founded on counting the syllables of the verse, and rhythm, properly speaking, has disappeared, except so far as it shows its influence in the combination of verses of different lengths in a stanza.

This leads us to another consideration, which is of the highest importance in studying Provençal versification. Rhythm showed its influence on the poetry of the troubadours, not only in the single verses, but also in the composition of several verses of different sizes and cadences into an organic whole—the strophe. The harmonious beauty and impulsive lyrical pathos of Pindar's odes excite the same admiration as does the steady epical flow of Homer's hexameters; and to the inheritance of the strophe, and its development

into the stanza, mediæval poems, and especially the canzos of the troubadours, owe their greatest charm. To the relics of ancient literature already mentioned was added the rhyme, defined by strict rules and made obligatory; and this new principle contributed not a little to give variety and harmonious beauty to the mediæval stanza. In investigating Provençal versification, it will therefore be necessary to consider (1) rhythm, as shown in the manifold measures of verse, (2) rhyme, and (3) the mode in which by these two elements combined the stanza of the troubadours was formed.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### RHYTHM.

In no other language of Western Europe has the artistic development of poetical forms ever reached so high a degree of perfection as that to which it was raised by the troubadours. The craftsmanship of the poets and singers, the refinement of the audiences in appreciating beauties of rhyme and metre which the modern ear can scarcely realise, are the more astonishing, since the period of the poetry of the troubadours is comparatively a very early one, and since their civilisation in other respects shows the characteristics of the early middle ages. Through various favourable circumstances, the *langue d'oc* succeeded, first of all Romance idioms, in forming itself into a distinct and regular language, with strictly defined grammatical rules. The great number of final syllables of the same sound, which existed in the comparatively well preserved forms of declensions and conjugations, offered an immense quantity of rhymes; and this ease of rhyming, combined with the liveliness and sanguine temperament of southern Frenchmen, naturally gave rise to an early poetry. The primitive

stages of this poetry have, as we know, disappeared; and we have lost in these popular songs, which undoubtedly existed, the most valuable material for the history of Provençal metrical art. The first troubadour, Count Guillem IX. of Poitou (1071–1127), appears as a finished poet, in full possession of all the refinements of Provençal metre, without any predecessor or previous document of lyrical poetry to account for his great accomplishments and experience. In fact, after him there is no important progress of metrical art; and, although several troubadours formed new stanzas and used difficult rhymes of their own, it may be said that, in the main, the first troubadour knew as much of the harmonious beauties of stanza and rhyme as the last—Guiraut Riquier, who died about two hundred years after the birth of Guillem.

This great stability of the metrical rules soon led to a desire of fixing them by a theoretical system; and we know of several attempts to perform this difficult task. The most important and voluminous work of this kind must be our guide in the maze of Provençal subtlety; though in many cases it is more difficult to follow the mediæval scholar through his confused definitions than to abstract the rules from the poems themselves. The author of 'Las Leys d'Amors,' as he calls his compilation, considered, in accordance with the notions of his time, that it was a sign of highest scholarship to accumulate the greatest possible amount of undigested knowledge, without taking the trouble of grouping

his heterogeneous materials. He desires to show his familiarity with almost all the branches of human knowledge. Grammar and rhetoric, prosody and dialectics, the trivium and quadrivium, have been objects of his study; and his work is undoubtedly one of the most valuable exponents of mediæval scholarship. In fact, it may be called the aggregate expression of the literary ideas of his time and country, the more so as it can scarcely be said to have been written by one author only. In the middle of the fourteenth century (1356 is the exact date of the work), the time of the great troubadours had long passed away; and their pure language was yielding more and more to the influences of southern patois and the northern *langue d'oïl.* To oppose the further decline of the language and poetry, several institutions were founded by patriotic and cultivated men, who, however, being scholars rather than poets, could not revive the spirit of the troubadours. One of the most renowned of these societies, which resembled modern academies, named the 'Seven Poets of Toulouse,' commissioned their chancellor for the time being, Guillaume Molinier, to write, or rather to compile from the works of other scholars, and under their own supervision, a compendium of the rules of poetry. The result was 'Las Leys d'Amors,' which, founded entirely on the traditions of the troubadours, although written after their time, is of the greatest importance for the metrical analysis of their works. M. Gatien-Arnoult, keeper of the manuscripts of the Académie des Jeux Floraux

at Toulouse, has published an accurate edition of the work from the manuscript belonging to that Academy.

Another mediæval work, which it will often be necessary to refer to, is Dante's treatise 'De Vulgari Eloquentia.' His remarks on the measurement of verse and the construction of stanzas were originally meant to apply to poems written in his own language. But the affinity between the poets of the *lingua di sì* and those of the *langue d'oc*, and especially the great influence of the troubadours on Dante's own metrical system,[1] make it permissible to apply the rules laid down by the great Italian to the works of the Provençal poets.

In the fifth chapter of his treatise Dante defines the limits of the length of a verse in this way: 'Nullum adhuc invenimus carmen in syllabicando endecasyllabum transcendisse nec a trisyllabo descendisse.'[2] By trisyllabus and endecasyllabus he means lines, or carmina, as he calls them, which in reality may consist of no more than two and ten syllables. For in Italian poetry feminine rhymes are so predominant in number that Dante does not think it necessary to take into consideration the small minority of masculine rhymes, and counts the last short syllable of the feminine rhyme even in those few cases where in

[1] The stanza of the Sestina, as we know, both Dante and Petrarch took from Arnaut Daniel, whom the latter calls—

'Fra tutti il primo Arnaldo Daniello
Gran maestro d'amor.'

[2] *Opere Minori*, ed. Fraticelli, ii. 212.

reality it does not exist. The 'Leys d'Amors,' according to its national view, follows a totally different principle of measuring verse. It first states the difference between masculine and feminine rhymes, calling the former accen agut, and the latter accen greu. Then it counts the syllables of each verse really existing, neglecting, however, the last short syllable if the verse ends with a feminine rhyme. An example will best show the difference of the two systems. Of the two following lines,

anz li mal trag mi son joi e plazer
sol per aiso, car sai q'amors autreja,

the first consists actually of ten syllables, the last of which has the metrical accent. This, therefore, the 'Leys d'Amors' would call a 'bordo de x. syllabas con accen agut.' The second line, though actually containing eleven syllables, it would call a 'bordo de x. syllabas con accen greu.' Dante, on the other hand, would call both verses endecasyllabi, not taking any notice of the rime tronco in the first. The 'Leys d'Amors,' therefore, differs widely, and even more than might at first appear, from Dante, in saying that the shortest verse possible is that of four, and the longest possible that of twelve, syllables. For what Dante calls a trisyllabus may be, as we have seen, in reality a line of two syllables; and the 'bordo de quatro syllabas' of the 'Leys d'Amors' may consist actually of five syllables. Verses shorter than four syllables, according to the 'Leys d'Amors' are permissible only in the form of bordos empeutatz or biocatz. By bordos

empeutatz are meant the different parts of a verse divided by a middle rhyme, such as

Perdut ai—e cobrarai.

Bordos biocatz are short verses which are mixed with others of greater length, and form, if rhyming, a sort of echo; for instance:

El contrari far vol
E col.

These limits, however, are too narrow, at least in one direction. In one of the poems of Guillem IX. of Poitiers there is a line consisting of no less than fifteen syllables, and therefore by far exceeding the number allowed by Dante or the 'Leys d'Amors.' This verse displays, notwithstanding its great length, a certain rhythmical beauty, which, considering the rarity of effects of that sort, makes it all the more remarkable. In the first stanza of the poem it runs thus:

q'una domna s'es clamada de sos gardadors a me.[1]

The extreme in the other direction is reached by the troubadour Marcabrun, who has verses of one syllable only, such as Ay, and Oc.

Between these extremes, verses of all lengths may be found now and then in the poetry of the troubadours; but nevertheless a preference for certain forms is visible. Dante's views on the subject, which, on the whole, may fairly be applied to Provençal verse, are contained in the following sentence: 'Pentasyllabum

[1] In this, as in all other cases, the expression of the 'Leys d'Amors' has been used in measuring verses, which, besides being more appropriate for the *langue d'oc*, seems also the more logical.

[viz., carmen, *i.e.* line] et eptasyllabum et endecasyllabum in usu frequentiori habentur, et post hæc trisyllabum ante alia: quorum omnium endecasyllabum videtur esse superbius tam temporis occupatione quam capacitate sententiæ, constructionis et vocabulorum.' This, rendered by Provençal terms, means that verses of four, six, and ten syllables (con accen agut), and next to them those of two syllables, are most in use, but that the finest of all is the decasyllabic line. It may be useful to illustrate this rule by a few examples. The bordo of two syllables, as has been shown, is allowed only in bordos biocatz or empeutatz, and cannot form an independent foundation for a stanza. Of much greater importance is the verse of four syllables. The troubadours appreciated its graceful and easy fall, and used it with predilection. The beautiful poem of Guillem de Cabestanh, 'Li douz cossire,' the finest of his, perhaps of all, Provençal canzos, is founded on this verse. Here it occurs with feminine rhyme only, in connection with the verse of six syllables, *e.g.*:

*En sovinensa*
tenc la car'el dous ris
*vostra valensa*
el bel cors blanc e lis.

The 'Leys d'Amors' quotes a poem, very likely invented for the occasion, where the stanza consists entirely of this verse. Here it occurs in both forms, with accen agut and accen greu. Notwithstanding a certain monotony, it is impossible to deny the merits

of harmonious beauty and lyrical pathos to a stanza like the following:

Que fers de lansa
mays no m'acora;
que mi transfora
lo cor el cors
l'enveios mors
e verenos
coma poyzos
dels vilas møtz,
quem fan jos votz
per maestria.

The verse of six syllables has been used by Bernard de Ventadorn for the stanza of one of his best canzos, where it occurs alternately with accen greu and agut:

De domnas m'es vejaire
que gran falhimen fan;
per so quar no son gaire
amat li fin aman.

However well suited in this case to the sentimental purposes of the troubadour, this verse is hardly fit to be used by itself in longer stanzas. There is a certain 'entre deux' about it, which deprives it of the graceful ease of shorter metres, without giving as an equivalent the grandeur of, for instance, the decasyllabic line. Its effect is much finer where it occurs combined with other verses in a stanza, as, for instance, in another poem of Bernard de Ventadorn, where it is found in connection with the verse of eight syllables, both showing accen greu:

Tant ai mon cor plen de joja
tot me desnatura;
flors blanca vermelh'e bloja
m sembla la freidura.

This is at the same time one of the few examples where the octosyllabic verse is used in lyrical Provençal poetry. Dante, in consequence of its rarity, does not even mention it. But it is nevertheless of great importance, being the favourite metre of the romance. The two most important Provençal romances, 'Flamenca' and the 'Roman de Giaufre,' are written in it, as is also a novelette by Raimon Vidal, the author of a Provençal grammar. The first lines exhibit him as a 'laudator temporis acti,' after the manner of the later troubadours:

En aquel temps c'om era jais
e per amor fis e verais
cuendes e d'avinen escuelh.

The octosyllabic verse with accen agut is more often found in lyrics than that with accen greu. In epic poetry both occur promiscuously.

Of all the different verses the most important both in lyrical and in epical poetry, in Italian, French, and Provençal, is the endecasyllabus, or verse of ten syllables. The variety of different forms in which it occurs, and of purposes for which it is used, make a short account of its origin and development almost necessary. This variety is effected by the manifold ways in which the cæsura, one of the few relics of ancient metrical art, is used. The 'Leys d'Amors' says: 'E devetz saber que en aitals bordos la pauza es la pauza en la quarta syllaba; e ges no deu hom transmudar lo compas del bordo, so es que la pausa sia de VI. syllabas el remanen de quatre, quar non ha bella cazensa.' The pauza here spoken

of is the cæsura, effected by a stronger accent being given to a certain syllable of the verse, and by a short rest which the voice naturally takes afterwards. This rest or pause may also be filled up by a short unaccentuated syllable which is not counted. In this case the pauza is feminine, or with accen greu: otherwise it has accen agut. As has been seen, the 'Leys d'Amors' lays down that the cæsura must be after the fourth syllable; and this indeed is the rule in lyrical poetry, from which that work takes all its examples. But the endecasyllabus occurs in much older documents in the *langue d'oc* and *langue d'oïl*, namely, in the old popular epic; and to this it is necessary to refer in order to give a full account of its development. The oldest poetic monument in the Provençal language is a fragment of what seems a long didactic poem, and is commonly called 'Boethius,' because the parts of it which remain treat of an episode in the life of that author. Boethius, we may here recapitulate, a Coms de Roma, and one of the wisest and most religious men of his age, has been thrown into prison, on a false pretence, by his enemy the Pagan emperor Teirix. In his misery, Philosophy, the heroine of Boethius's work 'De Consolatione Philosophiæ,' comes to comfort him. She appears to him under the form of a beautiful maiden, the daughter of a mighty king. In the hem of her raiment are wrought the Greek characters Π and Θ as symbols of 'la vita qui enter es' and 'la dreita lei.' In the middle of this description the manuscript breaks off, and leaves no indication of what was to

follow. The time of this interesting document is, as Diez has shown by linguistic reasons, not later than about 960; and its great age adds to its value for metrical purposes. The metre is essentially the same as in all French poems of the Charlemagne cycle, viz., the decasyllabic; and it is used in very nearly the same way. In both languages it was the rule to give the fourth syllable of each verse the strongest metrical accent, and thus to effect after this syllable the cæsura or 'pauza de bordo' which has been explained above. 'Boethius' has only verses con accen agut; and therefore to avoid monotony most of the pauzas are with accen greu, so that generally each line has eleven syllables, *e.g.*:

Nos jove ómne | quandiu que nos estam
de gran follía | per folledat parllam.

The following lines afford examples of the masculine cæsura:

E qui nos pais | que no murem de fam
cui tan amet | Torquator Mallios.

In a few cases, the second part of the verse contained one syllable less than usual, generally after a feminine pauza, which, as it were, covered this want, for instance:

donz fo Boécis | corps ag bo e pro.

In these cases it might almost be supposed that the cæsura had been left out by neglect. But this supposition is disproved by the fact that also after a pauza con accen agut the second half of the verse is shortened in the same manner, a phenomenon which can be ex-

plained only from the effect of the interval after the accent on the fourth syllable. An instance of this is the line:

Qu'el era cóms | molt onraz e rix.

Here the verse consists of only nine syllables. The metre in 'Boethius' could therefore vary from nine to ten or eleven syllables. This variety was even greater in other poems, where the feminine rhyme occurs together with the feminine pauza, so as to bring the length of the verse to twelve syllables, *e.g.*:

En autra térra | irai penre linhatge.

The hiatus in the cæsura, as is evident from this and many other examples, was not considered a fault; and the first vowel was certainly pronounced. This seems to mark the transition to the more modern French heroic verse, the Alexandrine, which was not used in the old chanson de geste. In epic poetry also the position of the cæsura after the fourth syllable is almost universal. But there are some exceptions to this rule. In 'Girartz de Rossilhon,' the most important popular epic of the *langue d'oc*, the pauza del bordo occurs always after the sixth syllable, *e.g.*:

Vecvòs per miei l'estorn | lo vilh Draugo
lo paire don Girárt | l'oncle Folco,

or with feminine pauza and masculine ending of the verse:

Tan vos vei entrels vóstres | queus an cobrit,

or with both feminine:

E fan lor cavals córre | per la varena.

The same form of the decasyllabic verse is also found

in some northern French epics, as in 'Audigier,' a later parody of the old heroic chanson de geste. The equal flow of this verse did not make it adaptable for the formation of stanzas; and there was the less occasion for such formation in the older epic poetry, as the rhyme or assonance remained unchanged through a great number of verses. This explains the tirade monorime which is the characteristic of the popular in contrast to the artificial epic. To break the monotony of this metre, however, many of the popular joglars introduced after a certain number of decasyllabic verses a shorter line, a bordo biocatz according to the expression of the 'Leys d'Amors,' which at the same time by its rhyme formed a transition to the following tirade. An instance occurs in the first part of the chronicle of the Albigeois, while in the second the shorter line is without any rhyme—one reason more for believing that the two parts were not both written by the same author, Guillem de Tudela. Moreover, lyric poets used a kind of tirade monorime intermixed with shorter verses, such as is found in the song by which Richard Cœur de Lion beguiled the hours of his imprisonment in Germany. The first stanza of this song may be quoted as an example of this form:

Ja nus homs pres non dira sa razon
adrechament, si com homs dolens non;
mas per conort deu hom faire canson:
pro n'ay d'amics, mas paubre son li don.
Ancta lur es, se per ma rezenson
soi sai dos ivers pres.

The word 'pres' recurs at the end of each of the

shorter verses, and forms a sort of burden. The same song also exists in French, and the latter seems indeed to be the original version.

It would lead us too far to follow the traces of the decasyllabic verse through the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese languages. In Italy the position of the cæsura was not fixed by strict rules as in the *langue d'oc* and *langue d'oïl*; sometimes there are two accents and corresponding pauzas on the fourth and seventh or eighth syllables, and sometimes only one on the sixth. The cæsura in the decasyllabic metre which occurs in the canzos and sirventeses of the troubadours, is different from that in the tirade monorime of the popular epic. It has been seen that here in case of a pauza con accen greu the first part of the verse, and therefore the whole verse, became one syllable too long. The stricter metrical rules of lyric poetry did not admit of such liberties. Hence, if the lyrical cæsura is masculine, the chief accent is on the fourth syllable; if it is feminine the chief metrical accent goes back to the third syllable, and the fourth, which in epic poetry is always strongly accentuated, becomes weak. The masculine lyrical cæsura, which shows no difference from the epical, is found, for instance, in the beginning of Bertrand de Born's sirventes:

Pos als barós | enoja e lor peza
d'aquesta pátz | qu'an faita li dui rei;

while the lyrical pauza con accen greu occurs in the third stanza of the same poem:

Cum aquésta | ni autra c'om li grei.

The epical cæsura in its feminine form is found very seldom in the poetry of the troubadours. Two of the rare instances occur in a canzo of Guillem de Cabestanh; and there the case is the more remarkable, as the epical and lyrical pauzas appear intermixed. The two verses are:

Don mi remémbra | douza terra el pais,

and

En autra térra | irai penre lenhatge.

In both cases the epical pauza might be got rid of by a slight alteration, which, however, is not confirmed by the authority of any manuscript. In the first case, 'membra' might easily be written instead of 'remembra,' by which means the epical cæsura would become lyrical; and in the second case the *a* of 'terra' might be supplied by an apostrophe, by means of which the pauza would altogether disappear. In the last stanza of the same poem, as preserved in several manuscripts, is found the only example in lyrical poetry of the second hemistich being shortened after the feminine pauza, which, as has been seen above, occurs several times in 'Boethius.' The line is this:

Q'ieu non vólgra | qe fos ma cusina.

But the difficulty is not serious; for this and other reasons, metrical and philological, prove that the stanza is a spurious addition of a later ignorant scribe. This instance shows how important a knowledge of metrical rules is for the critical editing of a Provençal author.

# CHAPTER XXX.

## RHYME.

THE immense number of rhyming words in the Provençal language has been already referred to. Of the fifty-four forms of the verb of the first conjugation, only nine have the accent on the root, while forty-five have it on one of the final syllables; hence all the verbs of this conjugation rhyme with each other in these forms. Again, all the derivative syllables of the adjectives and nouns, like at-ada, ut-uda, or atge, ansa, ensa, and many others, have the accent on these syllables, and offer great choice of material to the poet in search of rhymes. Consequently, in all Provençal poetry, the rhyme plays a principal part, and metrical scholars considered it their most important task to introduce the student into the minutest subtleties of its beauty. Dante intended to speak of rhyme 'secundum se' in one of the later parts of his book, which he never wrote; in the existing parts he speaks of it only in connection with the stanza. In accordance, however, with the 'Leys d'Amors,' it will be necessary to consider the essence of rhyme in itself, before proceeding to its influence on the

combination of verses in a stanza, and of stanzas in a poem.

The 'Leys d'Amors' uses the word rim or rima in a perfectly different sense from the modern rhyme. Its definition is this: 'Rims es certz nombres de syllabas, ajustat a lui autre bordo per pario d'aquela meteysha accordansa e paritat de syllabas, o de diversas am bela cazensa.' Rim exists therefore not only if the accordansa is the same, which constitutes approximately what is now called rhyme, but also though the ends of the two verses concerned sound quite differently, provided that a certain harmony or cazensa is effected simply by their lengths or accents. This must be borne in mind while we consider the division of rims into four classes as given by the 'Leys d'Amors,' viz., rims estramps, accordans, ordinals, and dictionals. The division is not very logical; for some of the rims enumerated have nothing to do with the essence of rhyme. Rim estramp in its exact meaning is nothing but the absence of rhyme or even assonance between two verses. In the poetry of the troubadours there is scarcely a line which has not its corresponding rhyme, either in its own or in another stanza, so that rims estramps are of no importance for the present purpose. Everything that is now called rhyme and was used by the troubadours is contained under the second head, rims accordans. This accordansa may be sonan, consonan, or leonisme; and the rims sonans and consonans must be again subdivided into bords (French, bâtard) and lejals. Rim sonan bord is what

is now called assonance, and is very frequently found in Spanish poetry. The 'Leys d'Amors' gives examples of it con accen agut,

> Encarcerat tenetz mon cor am*ors*,
> E delivrar nol pot autra mas v*os*;

and con accen greu,

> La mors quieu port a mi dons es tan g*randa*,
> Quieu lo thezaur del realme de F*ranza*, etc.

In the poems of the troubadours this assonance was not permissible. Accordingly, the 'Leys d'Amors' does not approve of it, though admitting that it was daily used in the mandelas, or popular chansons. 'For these,' says the author, with all a scholar's contempt for popular poetry, 'I do not care, because I do not see nor can I find a known author for them.' Rim sonan lejal, which exists only with accen agut, is what is now called masculine rhyme; that is to say, the last syllable in the rhyming lines must contain the same vowel with identical consonants (if any) after, but different ones before, it. The examples of this are of course innumerable. The second kind of rims accordans is called consonan. This also is subdivided into bord and lejal. The rim consonan bord is always con accen greu, so that only the second and unaccentuated syllable agrees with the corresponding one in the other verse, *e.g.*:

> Sino de liei que del sieu foc m'abran*da*
> Quar ela sab la maniera quos tu*da*.

The modern ear would not discern this kind of rhyme; and the troubadours also never used it. Perhaps the author of the 'Leys d'Amors' introduced it

merely in order to give completeness to his system. Rim consonan lejal has always accen agut, and is found where the last and accentuated syllable in two verses is exactly the same in spelling, but different in meaning. Examples of this class are numerous in the poetry of the troubadours: the following is from a canzo of Serveri de Gironne:

E costumatz tanh que sia tan gen (adj. gentilis)
Que governar se puesca tota gen (noun, gentem).

The same rhyme is also found in mediæval and modern French poetry, where it is called 'rime riche.' The chief characteristic of an accordansa consonan is the identity of vowels and consonants in the last syllable, but in the last syllable only. On the other hand, in the third division of accordansa, the leonisme, the last syllable but one, also must to a certain extent agree in the corresponding verses. Leonismetat is again subdivided into rims leonismes simples, and parfaitz. In the former the consonants before the vowel in the last syllable but one must differ: in the latter they must be identical. Rim leonisme simple con accen greu is what is now called feminine rhyme, as in

tot autra dona d'esser bella
lai on es cesta damaisella.

Con accen agut, it is again one of those cases where, as in the rim consonan bord, the rhyme is extended to an unaccentuated syllable, which in this case appears before the rhyming syllables. The 'Leys d'Amors 'gives the following example:

Tan prozamens feric Găstós
De lansa massas e băstós.

The following is rim leonisme parfait con accen greu :

l'autrui beautat tein es e*ffassa.*
li viva colors de sa *fassa* ;

con accen agut :

Al arma dona s*anĕtát*
Qui fug a tota v*anĕtát.*

The former would be called in German 'weiblicher rührender Reim;' and of the latter the same may be said as of the leonisme simple con accen agut. In this case the rhyme is extended backwards as far as the last syllable but two ; sometimes even the last four or five syllables are included in the accordansa leonisme. The 'Leys d'Amors' gives an instance of what it calls rim mays perfait leonisme. in which the last five syllables are intended to rhyme in two different verses :

So don le cors p*ren noyridura*
Lo fai tornar *en poyridura.*

In case the leonismetat is effected by two separate words, these words of course must always differ in their meaning. It may also be mentioned that rims consonans as well as leonismes are called contrafaitz, if the syllables or letters forming the rhyme are divided by the end of a word; as, for instance :

a celz que la vezo ni l'auzon
quan las donas sa beutat lauzon.

Such is the division which the 'Leys d'Amors'

gives of rhymes in general. The system shows a certain scholastic consistency; but the real essence and origin of rhyme are entirely overlooked, or even wrongly defined. Entirely different things are brought under the same head, as, for instance, assonance and masculine rhyme (rim sonan); while, on the other hand, things which decidedly belong together are separated. Thus the simple rhyme is called rim lejal sonan, while the simple feminine rhyme, which is obviously derived from it, is classed together with the rim leonisme, from which it differs essentially. The same is the case with the rims consonan lejal and leonisme parfait con accen greu. In subsequent chapters the work gives a complete list of the different artificial rhymes. They are too numerous to be discussed here; besides which, many of them are nothing but subtleties of the author, and are hardly ever used by the better troubadours. It is only necessary to consider those which are of real importance in studying the relics of Provençal poetry. The order also in which the different kinds are enumerated need not be followed: it is sometimes arbitrary, and sometimes utterly confused.

After expounding what rhyme is, the 'Leys d'Amors' very properly proceeds to ask where rhyme is to be found. Every possible combination in this respect is brought under a new head, viz., rims ordinals. This expression is exceedingly ill chosen; for the words rims ordinals suggest some new kind of rhyme essentially different from rims consonans or sonans, while in reality they indicate only the

different positions which these same rhymes can have in verse or stanza. The author avoids giving a definition of rims ordinals, but begins at once to explain how 'aytals ordes se fai.'

Rhyme, it is explained, may connect the different parts of one and the same line with each other, or with the end of this line. The middle rhyme is called, in correspondence with the bordos empeutatz, rim empeutat or multiplicatiu. An example of the former mode occurs in one of Peire Cardinal's sirventeses:

Car los—garzos—vezon en patz sezer.

In the following line both kinds are combined, the rhyme being the same in the middle parts of the verse and at the end of it:

Mon port—conort—e mon cofort.

In some cases, as for instance between the cæsura of the decasyllabic verse and its end, the middle rhyme was strictly prohibited. But this middle rhyme is found very often between the same sections of different verses, as for instance in the above-mentioned sirventes of Peire Cardinal:

que fan—l'efan—d'aquela gent engleza
qu'avan—no van—guerrejar ab Frances;
mal an—talan—de la terr' engolmeza
tiran—iran—conquistar Gastines.

In order to display his art, the poet moreover made each pair of rhymes in the same line a rim consonan lejal. This kind of rhyme was sometimes

carried to such an extent that each syllable of a whole verse agreed with the corresponding syllable of another. This was called a rim serpenti. Of such exaggeration there is probably no instance in the good troubadours; the 'Leys d'Amors' gives the following:

Bos—dieus—clarratz[1]—cara
Los—mieus—gardatz—ara.

Next come the rhymes between the ends of the verses of one and the same stanza. The simplest form possible in this case was that all the verses of a stanza should have but one rhyme, which suggests the tirade monorime in the popular epic. The 'Leys d'Amors' calls this rim continuat. Although very simple, this rhyme was used by the most finished troubadours, such as Marcabrun and Aimeric de Peguilhan. Sordello bewailed in it the death of his friend Blacatz; and in the last-named poem combined with the long verse of twelve syllables, it has an excellent effect owing to its dreary monotonous sound.

When there are two or more rhymes in a stanza, their order is varied in many different ways. The most simple mode is what the 'Leys d'Amors' calls rims encadenatz; and next to this the rims crozatz. Rims encadenatz are crossed rhymes, viz., *a b: a b.* This position of the rhymes, continued through a whole stanza, is not often to be found in the better, or at least more artistic, troubadours.

[1] Clarratz is evidently a mistake; very likely it should be read clartatz = clarté.

Johan de Pena, one of the less celebrated, has used it in a stanza of charming simplicity:

> Un guerrier per alegrar
> vuelh comensar, car m'agensa
> que non lo dey plus celar,
> trop l'auray tengut en pensa;
> e guerrejaray d'amor,
> endomens que ma guerrieira
> a trobat guerrejador
> que guerreja volontieira.

Rims crozatz are found, to quote but one instance, in the two quatrains of a sonnet.

These are the principal divisions of rhyme in its relations to a single stanza. But the troubadours employed it also to keep up a certain connection between several, sometimes all, the different stanzas of a poem; and in this respect it must now be considered.

A change of rhyme from strophe to strophe—rims singulars—is rare, and, as a rule, found only where the stanza is very long and artificially composed. An example occurs in a song by Peire Cardinal, each stanza of which consists of no less than fifteen lines. Gaucelm Faidit and the Monk of Montaudon have used rims singulars also in shorter and simpler stanzas. The 'Leys d'Amors' gives no rule as to their use, but confirms indirectly what has been said, by giving as an example a very long and complicated stanza. Directly opposed to the rims singulars are the rims or coblas unisonans, where all the stanzas of a poem have the same rhymes in the corresponding lines. Sometimes poems of this kind are very long, so that the poet

had to find a great number of consonant words, which however, in the *langue d'oc*, was not as difficult as it would have been in one of the Teutonic languages. But in spite of this some of the German minnesingers, such as Count Rudolf of Neuenburg and Friedrich von Hausen, who were under the influence of the troubadours, tried to compete with them in the richness of their rhymes and the variety of their stanzas. Of Friedrich von Hausen a song remains, which is an exact imitation, in one stanza even a translation, of one of Folquet de Marseilles' canzos, which the German poet probably learned during the crusade of 1190, on which he accompanied the Emperor Frederick I. Sometimes the stanzas of a poem are grouped together in twos, threes, or fours, by means of equal rhymes. Such cases are described by the 'Leys d'Amors' as coblas doblas, triplas, &c. The better to display their skill, the greatest artists among the troubadours liked to choose for their rhymes rare and unusual words, the meaning of which, at the same time, was not easy to discover. The greatest master in these 'rims cars,' and 'motz oscurs,' was Arnaut Daniel, whom Dante, very likely for that reason, calls the first of all troubadours. But Peire d'Alvernhe also says of his poems, as a proof of their high art, 'qu'apenas nulhs hom las enten.' To give an idea of this obscurity, which, however, did not increase by any means the beauty of a canzo, it will suffice to quote a stanza from one of Arnaut Daniel's poems, entirely written in rims cars:

En breu brizaral temps braus,
el bizel brunel e brancs
qui s'entresenhon trastug,
desobre claus rams de folha,
car no chant' auzels ni piula
m'ensenh amors, que fassa donc
tal chan qui n'er segons ni tertz,
ans prims d'afrancar cor agre.

It is worthy of notice that in the first lines the troubadour has used alliteration to increase the strange sound of his words. The lines serve at the same time as an example of another way of connecting stanzas with each other. All the different verses are without a rhyme in their own stanza, but find it in the corresponding verse of another, or of all the other stanzas. Rhyme of this kind is called by the 'Leys d'Amors' rim espar, while Dante uses the expression clavis. When the clavis runs through all the verses of each stanza, the case is described as rimas dissolutas. Arnaut Daniel seems to have been particularly fond of this form; for the sestina also, which he invented, and which Dante praised and imitated, is founded on the same principle. Other poets preferred generally to introduce only one clavis or, at most, two, interrupting in this way, sometimes with great effect, the equal flow of the rhymes. A modification of the rims espars is the rims capcaudatz. This takes place if the clavis is the last verse of the first stanza, and is introduced into the following, not in its corresponding place, but by way of first rhyme. Of the two stanzas, for instance, quoted by the 'Leys d'Amors,' the first ends with the

line, 'Li fizel de mortal pena,' and the first line of the second accordingly shows the same rhyme in 'verges eratz e vergena,' and continues the scheme exactly in the same way as the first stanza. The various combinations of stanzas by means of the rhyme are one of the most interesting parts of Provençal versification, and show a great refinement of taste in the mediæval poets. To convey an idea of the skill manifested in this way, it will be useful to give a short sketch of a canzo which, in this as in all other respects, may be considered as the standard piece of Provençal poetry. This is Guillem de Cabestanh's celebrated song, 'Li douz cossire,' through which, it is said, the poet lost his life, while making his name immortal. The poem consists of six stanzas, divided by means of corresponding rhymes into three groups of coblas doblas. But these three groups are again connected with each other; for the third stanza resumes the last feminine rhyme of the second, and uses it as first rhyme, introducing, however, new additional rhymes. The fifth stanza stands in exactly the same relation to the fourth. The four last lines of the second stanza show the following rhyming words—parvensa, temensa; fei, vei. The first rhyme of the third stanza must be feminine; and therefore the penultimate couple of rhymes is used, with some irregularity, as a kind of rims capcaudatz, and the beginning is

En sovinensa
tenc la car'el dous ris,
vostra valensa
el bel cors blanc e lis, &c.

The highest principle of art, variety in unity, seems to be here attained. In many cases this principle of connecting the different stanzas led to the most childish and trifling artificialities, as, for instance, in what the 'Leys d'Amors' calls rims retrogradatz, where the second stanza begins with the last rhyme of the first, and reproduces all the subsequent rhymes in reversed order.

This becomes yet more absurd if applied, as it sometimes is, to a single stanza, or even a single verse. In this case the stanza or verse has to be constructed in such a way that, without altering their meaning, the lines or words can change their places. The following lines, for instance,

> Vengutz es lo senhor d'amon
> Salutz grans portar en lo mon,

could equally well be read the last first; or even the words could change their position, in this way:

> Le senhor d'amon es vengutz
> portar en lo mon grans salutz.

The 'Leys d'Amors' adds, that he who likes to 'despendre son temps' with such trifles may even find words like papa, tafata, in which the different syllables can be changed ad libitum. The fourth and last class of rhymes, as given by the 'Leys d'Amors,' the rims dictionals, contains, for the greater part, unimportant trifles of this kind. Rim dictional itself means the combination of two words in the rhyming syllables, which can be derived from each other, by either taking away or adding a syllable.

Thus the feminine and masculine forms of the adjective and past participle, at-ada, ut-uda, stand in the relation of rims dictionals. An example of another kind of derivation is given in the following lines:

> Mayres de Dieu prega to filh humil,
> quem denhe dar, sil platz humilitat;
> per miels tener lo dreg sendier util
> que menals bos al port d'utilitat.

This is an arbitrary invention, without any intrinsic value for the uses of genuine poetry. But some of the subdivisions given show how much the decline of the poetry of the troubadours was the consequence of their relying too much on the formal side of their art. Some poets seem to have particularly delighted in introducing rims leonismes parfaitz, or, as they are also called, rims equivocs, which, besides being different as regards the meaning of the words, show also a slight dlfference in sound of the vowels. In the following lines, for instance,

> Sias tempratz e gent apres
> En tas paraulas et apres,

the first apres, being the participle of apprendre, sounds the *e* a little more open than the second apres, afterwards. It was considered a great proof of poetical finish to introduce different vowels in combination with the same consonants into a stanza. The elder Gavaudan seems to have written the following verses entirely for this purpose:

> Mos sens es cl*a*rs
> als bos entended*o*rs;
> trop es osc*u*rs

a selh que no sap gaire ;
per que cujærs
lai on no val valørs,
non es sabers
ni sens a mo vejaire.

In a poem attributed by different manuscripts to Bernard de Ventadorn and Daude de Pradas, the poet has introduced all the five vowels in this way. This fact seems not to have been known to the author of the 'Leys d'Amors:' he would probably otherwise have mentioned a practice so much to his liking.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE STANZA.

We now come to the third division of the subject —the formation of the stanza. The consideration of metre and rhyme has shown the skill of the troubadours, but also the danger into which their marvellous finish led them, viz., to forget the real poetical value of their work over the beauty of form. This danger was not equally imminent in forming the stanza, seeing that its rules were too securely founded on the national sense of harmony, and too difficult to comply with, to afford an occasion for easy trifling. The stanza, accordingly, we have to consider as the highest development of art reached by the troubadours. It is therefore surprising that the 'Leys d'Amors' says nothing of any importance regarding its composition. The author of the work had evidently a very vague idea of the real essence of the stanza. The only guide, therefore, in our investigation must be Dante's work, 'De Vulgari Eloquentia,' in which he draws a full and logical account from his own deep knowledge and experience. But many of his expressions will be obscure until the musical system of the middle

ages is better understood. The rules of musical rhythm are indeed inseparably connected with all forms of Provençal poetry. But the way at least may be partially cleared, and the words of the great Italian poet illustrated by examples from the works of the best troubadours.

The definition which the 'Leys d'Amors' gives of a stanza, or, as it calls it, cobla, is very unsatisfactory, or rather is no definition at all. It is expressed in a long poem of the author's own manufacturing, the meaning of which is simply that a cobla may consist at least of five, and at most of sixteen verses, not including the shorter lines known under the name of bordos biocatz. Nothing more is said on this important subject. Of a division of stanzas according to their metrical and musical composition the author seemingly knows nothing. Dante, on the other hand, begins his long and careful investigation by stating first that 'omnis stantia ad quandam odam recipiendam armonizata est.' The word 'odam' in this connection must be understood in a double sense—a musical and a metrical: in the former it means simply melody, in the latter the metrical scheme of the stanza. But this oda is very different in different cases: 'quia quædam [stantiæ] sunt sub una oda continua, usque ad ultimum progressive, hoc est sine iteratione modulationis cujusquam et sine dieresi;[1] et dieresim dicimus deduc-

[1] Dieresis probably, where it occurs in this treatise, is always a misreading for diesis, which is the proper term for what Dante means.

tionem vergentem de una oda in aliam ; hanc voltam vocamus cum vulgus alloquimur.' In the cases here referred to, therefore, the flow of melody or verse must not be interrupted by a marked rest or pause, but must go on in an equal strain to the end of the stanza. This kind of stanza, Dante continues, was used chiefly by the great Arnaut Daniel, and especially in the sestina invented by that troubadour, and imitated by Dante himself. A stanza of one of Arnaut's sestine will at once make the meaning of Dante's words clear :

Lo ferm voler qu'el cor m'intra,
nom pot ges becs escoissendre ni ongla
de lauzengier, sitot de maldir s'arma ;
e per no l'aus batr' ab ram ni ab verga
sivals a frau, lai on non aurai oncle
jauzirai joi en vergier o dins cambra.

It would be impossible to find a point where to divide this stanza on any principle. There are no groups of verses marked by rhyme, seeing that there is no rhyme ; there is no change between accen agut and accen greu ; there is not even a strong grammatical pause. Accordingly it may be concluded that the musical accompaniment of the words was not interrupted by any striking harmonious modulation such as would have made a rest necessary. Exactly the same may be said of Dante's own sestina,

Al poco giorno, ed al gran cerchio d'ombra,[1]

which is constructed on the same principle. In many other cases also where there are rhymes a division of the stanza according to Dante's system is

[1] *Canzoniere*, ed. Giuliani, p. 227.

utterly impossible, because the different parts allow of no forming into groups by the recurrence of the same order of rhymes. For instance, the following stanza of Jaufre Rudel must have been sung to a continued oda without any interruption:

Quan lo rius de la fontana
s'esclarzis, si cum far sol;
e per la flors aiglentina
el rossignoletz el ram
volf e refraing et aplana
son dous chantar et afina,
dreitz es queu lo meu refranha.

Stanzas, however, 'sub una oda continua,' are not the rule. 'Quædam vero sunt,' Dante continues, 'dieresim patientes, et dieresis esse non potest, secundum quod eam appellamus, nisi reiteratio unius odæ fiat vel ante dieresim vel post vel utrimque.' The criterion, therefore, of the possibility of a dieresis or volta is, first of all, that in the poem there should be certain groups defined musically by the repetition of the same melody, and metrically by the recurrence of the same rhymes and of verses of the same length. The volta can, as has been seen, be either before or after such a group, or between two different groups if both parts of a stanza are divided in this way. Dante gives the terms for all these combinations in the following words: 'Si ante dieresim repetitio fiat, stantiam dicimus habere pedes, et duos habere decet, licet quandoque tres fiant, rarissime tamen. Si repetitio fiat post dieresim, tunc dicimus stantiam habere versus; si ante non fiat repetitio, stantiam

dicimus habere frontem; si post non fiat, dicimus habere syrma sive caudam.' These few words contain in a nutshell the whole theory of Italian, and, with some slight changes, also of Provençal, stanzas. It remains to enter into the special cases referred to by this rule. The first alternative Dante mentions is that of a division effected by the repetition of certain melodic and rhythmic phrases in the first part of a stanza. After these groups, which in this case are called pedes, a rest or volta becomes necessary; and after this a new melody begins, which lasts to the end of the stanza, and is called a cauda.[1] The following is one of the very numerous examples of a stanza consisting of two pedes and a cauda:

Pedes
1. Ai deus, ar sembles ironda,
que voles per l'aire,
qu'eu vengues de noit prionda
lai al seu repaire!
2. bona domna jauzionda
mortz es vostr' amaire,
paor ai quel cors mi fonda,
s'aissom dura gaire.

Cauda
domna, vas vostr' amor
jonh mas mas et ador
bel cors ab fresca color,
gran mal me fatz traire.

In this case the cauda is as long as one pes, consisting, as it does, of four verses. Very seldom, says

[1] The meaning of the word coda in modern music is not exactly the same as the one here given by Dante, but might well be derived from it.

Dante, are there more than two pedes to a cauda. This, however, applies only to the Italian literature of his time. In Provençal poetry there are many instances of three pedes in a stanza; and the favourite form of the Italian poets of the cinquecento, the ottava rima, must also be defined as a stanza consisting of three pedes and a cauda. The most important form of lyrical Italian poetry, the sonnet, consists of pedes and cauda. The two quatrains show the required repetitio unius odæ, and the two terzine form the cauda. If the repetition of a melodic and metrical phrase takes place after the volta, and only there, the two groups in the second part of the stanza are called versus, while the first undivided part assumes the name of frons. The number of versus scarcely ever exceeds two. This form is also very common in Provençal poetry. In the following stanza of Guillem IX. of Poitiers, the first three lines form the frons, and the last four are divided into two versus of two lines each:

Frons
Eu conosc ben cel qui bem di
e cel quim vol mal atressi,
e conosc ben celui quem ri,

Versus 1.
e sil pro s'azautan de mi,
conosc assaz;

Versus 2.
qu'atressi dei voler lor fi
e lor solaz.

These two principles of division in a stanza, viz., pedes and cauda, or frons and versus, Dante seems to consider as the most important. In both cases the stanza is actually divided into three parts; and

this, indeed, was the fundamental principle of the Italian lyrical stanza, which in this respect, in conformity with the middle-high-German strophe, differs from the *langue d'oc*. Into old Italian poetry this tripartite division was perhaps introduced from the leonine hexameter, which, as has been stated before, sometimes took a similar form. In the Teutonic languages it seems much older; and indeed it is to be found in the old Icelandic ljôđahâttr, where the first two lines are of equal length and belong to one another, while the third one, longer than each, stands by itself. In the German popular epic this principle is not visible; but it appears again unmistakeably in the mediæval 'minneliet.' The usual form in the latter is pedes and cauda, which here are called Stollen and Abgesang. It is impossible here to consider the interesting phenomena arising from the conflict of this principle with the Provençal bias in those cases where the German minnesinger tried to imitate the stanzas of the troubadours. The prevalent principle in Provençal poetry seems to have been the division of a stanza into two corresponding parts; and, accordingly, to the above-mentioned combinations two more of great importance must be added. The first of these, which Dante also is acquainted with, is the division of a stanza into pedes and versus. In this case the stanza is divided into four parts; but each pair of these is so closely connected that the Provençal principle of a division into two halves is fully borne out—the more so, as

there were evidently only two different melodies, each of them being repeated. The instances are again very numerous. In the following stanza of Peire d'Alvernhe's, the pedes and versus consist of two lines each:

Pes 1. Rossinhol, en son repaire
m'iras ma domna vezer,
Pes 2. e digas lil meu afaire
et ill diguat del seu ver,

Versus 1. quem man sai—com lestai;
mas de mill sovenha,
Versus 2. qui ges lai—per nuill plai
ab ri not retenha.

The fourth and last combination occurs when the stanza consists of a frons and a cauda, that is to say, when the two parts are undivided in themselves, but when a new melodic and metrical period begins after a certain number of verses. This form shows the Provençal principle of a division into two parts more clearly than any of the others; but Dante, from his point of view, is also right in not approving of it, or rather in not acknowledging it as a division at all, seeing that there is no 'repetitio unius odæ.' One out of many examples of this phenomenon is a stanza of Bertrand de Born's, where the frons and cauda consist of three lines each:

Frons Autr' escondig vos farai plus sobrier
e no mi posc orar plus d'encombrier:
seu anc failli vas vos neis del pensar,

Cauda quant serem sol en chambr'o dins vergier,
faillam poder deves mon compaignier,
de tal guiza que nom posc' ajudar.

The end of the first and the beginning of the second musical and metrical phrase, as marked by the diesis or volta, was generally further strengthened by the conclusion of the grammatical sentence. In most of the numerous stanzas already quoted, the volta contains either a full stop or a semicolon, or at least a comma. The sentence is seldom carried on through the volta, though even the best troubadours were not always careful in applying this rule.

By these various methods, the stanza was strictly divided into different parts. But, on the other hand, the feeling of the troubadours for unity and harmony was too keen not to make it desirable to bridge over somehow the gap made by the volta, and to preserve the connection between the two sides. This was done by means of the rhyme, which, as has been seen, was used for a similar purpose between the different stanzas of a poem. This process is called by Dante concatenatio; and this concatenatio might be effected in two different ways. The first and simpler mode consists in the cauda or versus adopting one or several rhymes of the frons or pedes. This is the course usually followed; and almost all the stanzas above quoted may serve as examples. So in Bertrand de Born's poem the cauda repeats both the rhymes of the frons. In Guillem IX.'s stanza the versus take up the only rhyme of the frons, adding a new one of their own. This concatenatio, however, was not considered absolutely necessary; and Peire d'Alvernhe, for instance, one of the most finished troubadours, in-

troduces into the versus of his stanza rhymes entirely different from those found in the pedes. Another kind of concatenatio is effected by adding, either before or after the volta, a line which contains the rhyme of the other part of the stanza. How the troubadours contrived not to disturb the flow of their melody by this new and seemingly inharmonious element it is difficult to say. Perhaps it was sung to a sort of recitative or arioso of its own, which served as a prelude to the new melody of the second part. The meaning of this will be clearly shown by the following stanza by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras:

Era pot hom conoisser e proar
Que de bos faitz ren deus bon gazardo,
qu'al pro Marques n'a fait esmend'e do,
quel fai son pretz sobrels melhors pojar;
si quel crozat de Frans e de Campanha
l'an quist a deu per lo melhor de totz,
e per cobrar lo sepulcr'e la crotz
on fon Ihesus, qu'el vol en sa companha
l'onrat marques, et al deus dat poder
de bos vassalhs e de terr'e d'aver
e de ric cor per melhs far so quel tanha.

This stanza consists of a frons and two versus of three lines each. The first four lines are a whole in themselves; and after them the frons ought to be concluded by the volta, as is indicated by the punctuation after 'pojar.' But the poet adds a fifth line, in order to introduce a rhyme from the versus, and in this way effects the concatenatio he needs. There was yet another way of connecting the two parts of the stanza which might in a certain sense also

be called concatenatio, but which was seemingly unknown to Dante. The following stanza of Cercalmont's,

> Senhors e dompnas gerpira
> s'a lei plagues queu li servis,
> e quem diria m'en partis,
> fariam morir des era,
> qu'en autra non ai mon esper
> noit ni jorn ni matin ni ser,
> ni d'als mos cors no consira,

consists evidently of a frons and a cauda, of three lines each. The fourth verse does not belong to either, and its rhyme is not to be found in the same stanza; therefore it is to be called a clavis. But nevertheless it is of use for the purpose of connecting the frons with the cauda; for, by considering it as a kind of centre, and going from it to the beginning and to the end of the stanza, the reader will see that the two parts exactly agree as regards the length of the verses, and even their feminine rhyme.

In the eleventh chapter of his 'De Vulgari Eloquentia' Dante speaks of the relations between the parts of a stanza so far as the number and length of the lines are concerned. He enumerates and explains no less than nine different cases. For the present purpose, however, these are scarcely of any importance; for the rules given by him cannot be traced to the poems of the troubadours. In this respect the Provençal poets seem to have exercised great liberty, being protected against choosing bad proportions by their refined sense of harmony.

It still remains to mention a form of Provençal poetry, of which the essence cannot be explained nor the rules defined without the aid of Dante's statements. This is the tornada, a kind of postlude or envoi to the stanza, in which the poem is dedicated to the lady-love or the protector of the troubadour, who is generally introduced under a senhal or pseudonym to keep the real name secret. Peire Vidal always calls the beautiful Azalais 'Vierna,' while the senhal 'Bels Castiatz' designates his noble protector Sir Aimeric de Monrial. The 'Leys d'Amors' says that, as a rule, there ought to be two tornadas, the first of them containing the senhal. This, however, is not confirmed by the majority of Provençal poems, which contain many examples of a single tornada. In another respect also the 'Leys d'Amors' is very inaccurate. It says that the tornada must be identical in form with the latter half of the stanza, if this consists of an even number of lines, adding or leaving out one line where the number of the verses cannot be divided by two. But this applies only to those stanzas where no division is to be found. Where there is a diesis the rule is quite different, and can be learned only from Dante, who speaks of the tornada in the 'Convito,' where he derives the word from tornar, owing to a part of the oda returning in it. Accordingly the rule in the divided stanza is that the first tornada repeats the metrical form and rhyme of that part of the stanza—cauda or versus—which stands after the volta. Where there is a

second tornada it generally agrees with the first, being, however, always the shorter of the two. All this, of course, the author of the 'Leys d'Amors' could not know, because he was ignorant of the metrical and musical formation of the stanza; but it is of the highest importance for the study of Provençal versification, and shows again the great value of Dante's work in that respect. The above-stated rule is confirmed by so many examples from the canzos of the troubadours that it is scarcely necessary to bring new evidence for it. It will be more useful to mention some of the more important exceptions, which in this, as in other cases, 'firmant regulam.' If the last stanza of a poem ends with two versus, the tornada sometimes repeats only one of them. Sometimes also part of the cauda remains unrepeated. In other cases the tornada repeats exactly the metre of the cauda, but differs slightly from its rhymes. In a sirventes of Marti de Mons, which was written in the fifteenth century (1436), and by which the poet gained the 'englantina' in the competition of the Academy of Toulouse, the cauda of the last stanza consists of the following four verses:

doranavant no cal plus dart ny lansa
depus que dieus s'es mes de nostra part;
qu'a tout l'erguelh al verenos leupart
que ta lonc temptz nos ha donat dampnatge.

The first of these lines serves as concatenatio; and for that reason its rhyme agrees with the first part of the poem. In the tornada this reason of course did not exist; and therefore the poet very skilfully

rhymes the first line with the last line of the tornada instead of making it like the first verse of the cauda. The tornada, therefore, is this:

> Confort d'amors, fons he cap de paratge
> vostre car filh faytz que prim ho de tart
> nos velha dar totz ensemps bona part
> de paradis, le sobrier heretatge.

In many cases also there is no tornada at all, or it may be said to consist of the last stanza of the poem, if in this the senhal and dedication are introduced.

The principles insisted upon in the foregoing remarks may perhaps best be illustrated by an accurate metrical analysis of the subjoined canzo of Bernard de Ventadorn. For the purpose in question this poem has the double advantage of presenting a great complication of metrical rules, and of showing at the same time how the troubadours succeeded in combining such a complicated structure with the beauty of genuine poetry.

*a.* Be m'an perdut lai enves Ventadorn
tuit mei amic, pos ma domna nom ama,
et es be dreitz que jamais lai no torn,
qu'ades estai vas mi salvatg' e grama.
veus per quem fai semblan irat e morn,
quar en s'amor mi deleit em sojorn,
ni de ren al nos rancura nis clama.

*b.* Aissi col peis qui s'eslaiss' el cadorn
e no sap re tro que s'es pres en l'ama,
m'eslaissei eu vas trop amar un jorn;
qu'anc no saup mot tro fui en mei la flama
que m'art plus fort que no fai focs de forn;
e ges per so nom posc partir un dorn,
aissim te pres s'amors que m'aliama.

*c.* Nom meravilh si s'amors mi te pres,
que genser cors no cre qu'el mon se mire;
bels es e blancs e frescs e gais e les,
e totz aitals cum eu volh e dezire;
no posc dir mal de leis, que non i es;
qu'el n'agra dig de joi, seu l'i saubes,
mas no l'i sai: per so m'en lais de dire.

*d.* Totz temps volrai sa honor e sos bes
elh serai hom et amics e servire,
e l'amarai, be li plass'o belh pes,
qu'om no pot cor destrenher ses aucire.
no sai domna, volgues o non volgues,
sim volia, qu'amar no la pogues;
mas totas res pot hom en mal escrire.

*e.* A las autras sui aissi escasutz:
laquals si vol mi pot vas si atraire,
per tal coven que nom sia vendutz
l'onors nil bes que m'a en cor a faire;
qu'enojos es prejars, pos es perdutz:
per mius o dic, que mals m'en es vengutz,
qu'enganat m'a la bela de mal aire.

*f.* En Proensa tramet mans e salutz,
e mais de bes qu'om no lor sap retraire,
e fatz esfortz, miraclas e vertutz,
car eu lor man de so don non ai gaire;
qu'eu non ai joi mas tan com m'en adutz
mos Bels Vezers en Faituratz sos drutz
en Alvergnatz lo senher de Belcaire.

*g.* Mos Bels Vezers per vos fai deus vertutz
tals c'om nous ve que no si' ereubutz
dels bels plazers que sabetz dir e faire.

This poem consists of six stanzas and a tornada. The length of each stanza is seven verses, that of the tornada three. In each stanza there is, according to Dante's expression, a diesis or volta, for there is the required reiteratio unius odæ. This reiteratio takes place before the volta, while after the volta

no division is possible. The stanza therefore must be divided into two pedes of two lines each and a cauda of three lines. According to rule, the metrical division is marked by a strong grammatical break (at least a semicolon), the only exception being stanza *b*, where a punctuation in the volta is not possible. The tornada repeats as usual the form and rhymes of the cauda; and in it the poem is dedicated to the poet's lady-love, who is addressed by a senhal. Bel Vezer was in this case Agnes de Montluçon, wife of the troubadour's lord and protector, who raised him from the state of a common servant and gave him the first lessons 'del gay saber.' The verse of the stanza is decasyllabic; it occurs with masculine and feminine rhyme. The stanza may be formulated metrically by using capital letters for the decasyllabic line, and adding to them the sign ~ for the accen greu; the volta may be marked by a semicolon, and the division of the pedes from each other by a colon:

A B~ : A B~ ; A A B~.

Hence it appears that in each stanza there are only two different rhymes, the cauda repeating those of the pedes, which is the simplest form of concatenatio. Moreover, each couple of stanzas have the same rhyme, or are coblas doblas; the poet in consequence had to find, three different times, eight masculine and six feminine rhyming words, which, though not a very difficult task in the *langue d'oc*, required a certain amount of skill. In the last group of stanzas this number was increased by the tornada to ten and seven

respectively. Nevertheless there are only two cases of the same words with the same meaning occurring in the rhymes, or of motz tornatz en rim as the 'Leys d'Amors' calls them. Both these cases, *f* 3 = *g* 1 and *e* 4 = *g* 3, occur in the tornada, where they were not as strictly forbidden as in other positions. On the other hand there are many examples of 'rime riche' in its masculine as well as feminine form. The former or rims consonans lejals are *a* 1 = *b* 1 = *b* 6, *c* 6 = *d* 1, *d* 5 = *d* 6, *e* 3 = *e* 5 = *f* 5. The latter or rims leonismes parfaitz are *e* 2 = *f* 2. But in all these cases it is very doubtful whether these rhymes were intentional, since they exhibit no system or order. A remarkable sense of the effects of sound is shown in the alliterative use of the letter *f* in *b* 4 and 5, by means of which the pains of the unhappy lover are onomatopoetically expressed.

In the verse of ten syllables the cæsura is always of importance: it therefore remains to take note of it. The cæsura, where it appears feminine, has been divided into the epical and the lyrical, the difference being that in the epical pauza del bordo the accent always remains on the fourth syllable, after which another unaccentuated syllable is added to the first hemistich, while in lyrical poetry the accent itself is removed from the fourth to the third syllable. In the present poem the pauza con accen agut is by far the more common; where it occurs with accen greu it always takes the lyrical form. These cases are *d* 5 and 6, *e* 1, and *f* 1.

It may be worth while to notice that once, *d* 5,

the word domna is placed in the lyrical pauza. The troubadours, in addressing their lady-loves, seem to have liked this particular position of the word, by means of which it received a certain emphasis. In many canzos of different troubadours there are instances of this device; in one of Guillem de Cabestanh's songs it occurs twice, or, according to a Parisian manuscript in which the poem is also preserved, even three times.

# CHAPTER XXXII.

## SOME INTERLINEAR VERSIONS.

### I.

### *CANZO BY GUILLEM DE CABESTANH.*

Li douz cossire
The sweet thoughts

Qem don amors soven,
Which to me gives love often,

Domnam fan dire
Lady, me make say

De vos maint vers plazen ;
Of you many a poem pleasant ;

Pessan remire
Thinking I gaze (on)

Vostre cors car e gen,
Your body dear and comely,

Cui eu dezire
Which I desire

Mas qe non faz parven ;
More than (not) I make appearance ;

E sitot me deslei
And although myself I make (appear) disloyal

Per vos, ges nous abnei,
For you(r sake), scarcely (not) you I deny ;

Q' ades vas vos soplei
For soon towards you I pray

De francha benvolensa.
With genuine love.

Domna, on beutaz gensa,
Lady, where (in whom) beauty is an ornament,

Maintas vez oblit mei
Many times I forget myself

Q' eu lau vos e mercei.
That I may praise you and implore mercy.

Toz temps m'azire
All times me may hate

L' amors qeus mi defen,
The Love which you (from) me withholds

S' eu jal cor vire
If I ever the heart turn

Ad autr' entendemen;
To another (loving) understanding;

Tolt m' avez rire
Taken away (from) me you have laughter

E donat pessamen.
And given thought.

Plus greu martire
More severe martyrdom

Nuls homs de me no sen;
No man of me (than I) not feels;

Qar vos qe plus envei
For you whom more I desire

De re q'el mon estei,
Of (than a) thing which in the world is

Desautorc e mescrei
I disavow and deny

E desam en parvensa;
And un-love in appearance;

Tot qant faz per temensa
All how much I do through fear

Devez en bona fei
You must in good faith

Prendre, neis qan nous vei.
Take, even when not you I see.

En sovinensa
In memory

Tenc la car' el dous ris,
I hold the face and the sweet smile,

Vostra valensa
Your worth

El bel cors blanc e lis;
And the beautiful body white and lithe;

Si per crezensa
If through faith

Estes ves deu tan fis,
I were towards God as faithful,

Vius ses falhensa
Alive without failure

Intrer' en paradis;
I should enter into paradise.

Q'aissim sui ses toz cuz
For so myself I am (have) without all (any) hesitation

De cor a vos renduz
Of the heart to you given

Q'autra jois nom aduz;
That another joys not to me gives;

Q'una no porta benda,
For one not wears a band

Q'en prezes per esmenda
That I of her should prize as compensation

Jaser ne fos sos druz
To lie (with her) nor that I were her lover

Per las vostras saluz.
(In exchange) for the your greetings.

Toz jorns m'agensa
All the days me stirs

Desirs, tan m'abelis
Desire, so much me attracts

La captenensa
The bearing

De vos per cui languis;
Of you for whom I languish;

Bem par qem vensa
Good to me it seems that me should conquer

Vostr' amors, q'ans qeus vis
Your love, for before that you I saw

Fo m' entendensa,
It was to me a knowledge

Qeus ames eus servis;
That you I should love and you I should serve;

Q' aissim sui remansuz
For thus myself I am (have) remained

Sols ses autres ajuz
Alone without other helps

Q' ab vos, e n' ai perduz
But (from) you and therefrom I have lost

Mans bes, quis vuelhals prenda;
Many boons; he who for himself will (have) them take (them);

Q'a mi plaz mais q'atenda
For to me it pleases more that I should wait

Ses toz covenz saubuz
Without all covenants known

Vas don m' es jois creguz.
(With) towards (her) from whom to me (has) is joy grown.

Ans qe s'encenda
Before that itself may inflame

Inz el cor la dolors,
Inside in the heart the pain,

Merces desenda
Mercy may descend,

Domn' en vos et amors,
Lady, into you and love,

Qe joi mi renda
Which joy to me may give

En lonhs sospirs e plors.
Amidst long sighs and tears.

Nous o defenda
Not you this may forbid

Paratges ni ricors;
Parentage nor wealth;

Q'oblidaz m'es toz bes,
For forgotten (by) me is every boon,

S'ab vos nom val merces;
If with you not me helps mercy;

Ai! bella dousa res,
Oh! beautiful sweet thing,

Molt feraz gran franqesa
Much will you do great frankness

M'amessez o non ges;
(If) me you would love or not (scarcely)

Q'eras no sai qe s'es.
For now not I know which (itself) it is.

Non trop contenda
Not I find resistance

Contra vostras valors;
Against your worth(s);

Merces von prenda
Mercy you thereof may take

Tals q'a vos si' onors;
Such as to you would be an honour;

Ja nom entenda
Ever not me may hear

Dieus mest sos prejadors,
God amongst his worshippers,

Si volh la renda
If I will (take) the income

Dels qatre reis majors
Of the four kings greatest

Qe ab vos nom valgues
So that with you not to me should be of use

Dieus e ma bona fes;
God and my good faith;

Qe partir nom posc ges
For part (from you) not (me) I can scarcely

Tant fort si es empresa
So strongly itself is (has) inflamed

M' amors, e si fos presa
My love, and if it were found

En baisan nius plagues,
(In) kissing and if you it pleased

Ja no volgram solves.
Ever not should I wish myself that I severed.

Anc res q'a vos plagues
Ever a thing that (to) you pleased

Bona domna cortesa
Good lady courteous

Tan no m' estet defesa,
So much not to me was forbidden

Q' eu ans no la fezes,
That I sooner not it should do

Qe d'als mi sovengues.
Than of another thing (myself) I should think.

## II.

### *IDYLL BY MARCABRUN.*

A la fontana del vergier,
At the fountain of the orchard

On l' erb'es vertz jostal gravier,
Where the grass is green near the gravel

A l' ombra d' un fust domesgier,
In the shade of a tree indigenous

En aizement de blancas flors
In the beauty of white flowers

E de novel chant costumier,
And of new song familiar

Trobei sola ses companhier
I found alone without companion

Cela que no volc mon solatz.
Her who not relished my conversation.

So fon donzel' ab son cor bel,
This was a girl with her body beautiful

Filha d'un senhor de castel;
The daughter of one lord of a castle;

E quant eu cugei que l' auzel
And when I thought that the birds

Li fesson joi e la verdors,
Her made (gave) joy and the greenery

E pel dous termini novel,
And (because of) the sweet season new

E que entendes mon favel,
And that she would listen (to) my address

Tost li fon sos afors camjatz.
Soon (the) were her manners changed.

Dels olhs ploret josta la fon
From her eyes she cried by the fountain

E del cor sospiret preon.
And from the heart she sighed deeply.

'Jhesus,' dis ela, 'reis del mon,
'Jesus,' said she, 'king of the world,

Per vos mi creis ma grans dolors,
Through you me grows my great grief

Quar vostra anta mi cofon,
For your disgrace me injures,

